

DISCOURSES ON

The Philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita

Sri Mangal Charan



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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the Bhagavad Gita**

Sri Mangal Charan, BL

with a forward by

Sri S. Radhakrishnan



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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It is hardly necessary for me to say anything with regard to the book when a person like Dr S. Radhakrishnan has described it as 'a work of fundamental value containing the mature reflections of a mind steeped in the spirit of our ancient scriptures.' All that I can say is that I am deeply impressed by its profundity and lucidity, two qualities which are not easy to be found together. The more I read it the more am I struck not only by what we have got from him in this book but also by what we have lost on account of his premature passing away. It is evidently the result of deep study, profound reflection and illuminating experience.

—Rajendra Prasad
Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi

* * *

The crux of the whole doctrine of the *Bhagavad Gita* is that the ultimate reality can be apprehended and realized only by those who prepare themselves for it by rigorous study, by rigid discipline and by flawless character and conduct. The late Sri Mangal Charan was undoubtedly such a seeker of ultimate reality. This book of his discourses indubitably shows that Sri Mangal Charan was not only a great scholar steeped in ancient Hindu tradition but he had rare originality of mind in the interpretation of our greatest religious classic. The doctrines of the *Bhagavad Gita* are of permanent and eternal validity and are not dependent on the concomitant circumstances of time and space. I think that these doctrines have a special relevance and a special significance in the modern atomic age when nations are divided into antagonistic blocks and treaties and alliances.

I have great pleasure in commending this book of Sri Mangal Charan to the attention of the discriminating reading public.

—V. Rama Swami
Chief Justice, Patna High Court

Foreword

I have looked through the manuscript on the *Philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita* by the late Sri Mangal Charan, BL. It struck me as a work of fundamental value. It contains the mature reflections of a mind steeped in the spirit of our ancient scriptures. A culture is said to be alive when it is able to produce individuals, who from their personal experience bear testimony to the validity of the thoughts enunciated in the scriptures embodying that culture. The *Bhagavad Gita* has been the motive power of many millions of lives in this country. The late Sri Mangal Charan has not merely studied the *Gita*, but has reflected on the principles enunciated in it and has given us in this volume not the comments of the acharyas, but his own independent reflections. I hope that the book will be read by many.

—Radhakrishnan
19 April 1942

Preface

(First Edition)

What now comes out in the form of a book was dictated decades ago by my eldest brother, the late Sri Mangal Charan, BL, as discourses on the philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* to an aspirant after knowledge of the evolution of the universe, the mysteries of life and death, and the immortality of the soul. These discourses were more in the nature of lectures delivered by a teacher to his disciple than an essay on the subject or a work to be printed and published for public consumption.

Sri Indradeo Narayan, now one of the leading advocates of the Arrah Bar, had the honour and privilege of being associated with the late Sri Mangal Charan as one of his juniors in the profession of law, and he utilized the opportunity by learning at his feet the great truth embodied in this great book, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the 'Song of the Lord'.

I have not forgotten those youthful days, when, just a school student, I used to witness my brother speaking, as if thinking aloud, and Sri Indradeo Narayan writing with all the speed he could command, and wonder at the ease and the fluency with which the words, which are now in print, flowed down the lips which uttered them.

These discourses would have seen the light of the day long before, but as in the events that happened, they in a sense remained unfinished and could not be revised or brought into the shape of a book meant for publication

by our late lamented brother. We naturally hesitated to rush to the press with such an unfinished and unshaped material, lest we should be doing injustice to his ability as an author. But for the fact, that my elder brother Sri Bhagwat Prasad, a devoted Harijan sevak and now the senior most advocate of the Arrah Bar, could get an approach to Sir S. Radhakrishnan, who very kindly went through the manuscript and not only encouraged us in our desire to print and publish it, but wrote out the Foreword, these 'independent' and 'mature reflections of a mind steeped in the spirit of our ancient scriptures' would have remained buried, and this 'work of fundamental value' would not have come into print and received publication.

An ardent student of The *Bhagavad Gita* will not fail to be struck with the very original method these discourses adopt for exposition of the truth about the evolution of the universe and knowledge of Nirguna Brahma and of manifest divinity. These discourses, in revealing the 'Song of the Lord', strike a note, perhaps so far unknown and untouched, when they unfold the mystery of how the consciousness in its absolute nature – the Brahma, inexpressible, unrevealable, unmanifestable – expresses, affirms and reveals itself to itself as Saguna Brahma or Brahma with maya or prakriti. They illustrate the evolution of the universe and the various principles underlying the process by which the Absolute individualizes into humanity, and from humanity transcends back and merges into divinity. They expound the various stages through which the consciousness must pass in asserting its existence to itself by stating that the consciousness expresses itself as 'I am Myself', and by working out the formula based on three elements: the 'I-ness, the 'Am-ness' and the 'Myself-ness' of the 'I am Myself'. The chart appended to the book brings out with clearness, how in the course of evolution at each stage the subject, the 'I', goes out into the object, the 'Myself', through the self-assertion or affirmation of the 'Am', and then how the evolving current traces its course back to the

point from which it started, the – ‘I’ the subject – developing itself gradually through the inward activity of the ‘Am’, and realizing the identity of ‘the Myself’ with the ‘I’.

Of the flashes of original thinking, which will be found in abundance in these discourses, the presentation of the ten incarnations, *avatars*, of the Absolute as representing different stages of the evolution of the universe is the most illuminating.

Sri Mangal Charanji was the eldest of the nine children – four sons and five daughters – which my father had. Married early, as was usual at that time, my father for many years after his marriage did not have any issue. It began to be thought that a situation had arisen calling for another marriage. My mother felt that she had failed in her duty to her husband in not giving a son to him, and was naturally very unhappy. Her father’s brother had relinquished this worldly life and had adopted the tenets of what is called ‘aghora panth’. He had attained great spiritual powers. He was looked upon and revered as a great saint. He had his ashram on the banks of the Ganges at Zamania, six miles away from our village home, Dildarnagar, in the district of Ghazipur, situated in the neighbouring United Provinces, where the family lived before my father, also a lawyer, permanently settled down in practice at Arrah. One day the saint came to see his niece, my mother. He noticed traces of sadness on the face of his niece. On enquiry being told the reason, he asked my mother not to worry and blessed her and gave what is called ‘bardan’, that she would have a son in due time.

Within a year my late brother, Sri Mangal Charanji was born. It was indeed a great event, and a number of ‘jyotishies’ as usual assembled and prepared horoscopes of the newborn. All of them predicted that as a result of the constellation of planets at the time of his birth, the life of the young thing just born was in great danger and, that at least for five years to follow, he was not to put on any tailored garment.

News of the birth of a son to his niece was carried to the saint at Zamania. He lost no time in coming to bless the newborn baby. He was told of the reading of the horoscope by the astrologers. He felt amused, and saying that he would be responsible for the life of the boy for the next five years, he, in utter disregard of the injunction of the pandits, had the baby Mangal Charan put on a kurta and topi, tailored just then and there out of the cloth he used to tie round his waist as langoti.

As was predicted, baby Mangal Charan had no end of illness during the first five years after his birth, but what was required to restore him to health was not medical aid but the mere sending of a message to the great saint of Zamania.

As Mangal Charan completed his fifth year, the great saint, the 'Awagarh Baba' as he used to be called, came one day to see my mother. He told her that his own end was near, but that she should have no anxiety about the health of her young son as he would not fall ill any more. He told her further that her son was going to be one of the most learned men of the country, and that he would not experience any difficulty in acquiring knowledge, *vidya*, for on account of the samskaras of his previous birth, it would of itself come to him.

Immediately after his return to Zamania, the saint took samadhi and shuffled off this mortal coil. Young Mangal Charan, except having some trouble with one of his ears, which used to discharge some sort of foreign matter, had no serious illness of any kind until he reached the age of thirty-eight, when unfortunately he had this discharge from the ear stopped by administering some medicine prescribed by a 'kaviraj'. The stopping of the discharge eventually led to the formation of an abscess over the region of the ear, which later brought on other complications and brought about his end after a protracted illness, in May 1914 at the age of thirty-nine.

Sri Mangal Charan passed the entrance examination from the Arrah Zilla School and having joined the Muir Central College at Allahabad, graduated from the University of Allahabad.

As predicted by the great saint, the Awaghar Baba, the store of knowledge acquired by Sri Mangal Charan in the short span of life vouchsafed to him was enormous. Besides books on philosophy, science and literature of the West, there was nothing in the ancient scriptures of the East – Vedas, Vedangas, Upanishads, Shrutis, Smritis, Puranas, Darshans and Shastras, which he had not read, mastered, assimilated and reflected upon. It was said of him by no less a person than the late Sir Jwala Prasad, Judge, Patna High Court, who happened to be his contemporary at the College, that before he took his BA degree from the university, he had read almost all the books on western philosophy available in the university and the public libraries at Allahabad.

After his graduation, although he completed his law lectures duly within the following two years, Sri Mangal Charan deliberately avoided sitting for the BL Examination for three years successively to enable him to complete his studies of the ancient scriptures in the original Sanskrit.

Sri Mangal Charan took his BL degree in 1900 and joined the district Bar at Arrah. His success at the Bar was indeed phenomenal. Within two years of his joining the Bar, he rose almost to the top of the profession, and remained the unquestioned leader of the Arrah Bar until the very end of his life, which unfortunately, as already stated, came so soon as in the year 1914. The success he attained at the Bar was all the more surprising, because the profession of law never had the first place in his economy of things.

His evenings on weekdays and almost whole of Sundays were completely devoted to religious discussions and philosophical discourses. Except for two hours in the mornings, and the time he had to pass in the courtroom, he never allowed himself to be occupied by his briefs which in spite of the very highest fee he demanded kept on literally pouring. Every Sunday afternoon, for one hour or two, one would find him delivering a public lecture at what is known as 'Joda Mandir' in the town of Arrah on subjects of religious interest. Every Saturday evening one would find him holding

at his place a regular class for the teaching and study of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which used to be attended by the select few, who desired intensive coaching on the subject. Of them who are living, Sri Shyam Sundar Prasad and Indradeo Narayan may be mentioned. It was in the course of these *Gita* classes that these discourses, now in print, were delivered and taken note of verbatim by Sri Indradeo Narayan, which, with his kind permission, we are sharing with the public by publishing them. Sri Mangal Charanji fell ill, sometime in September 1913 and never recovered. Sri Mangal Charan had not only studied the *Bhagavad Gita* and reflected upon the principles enunciated in it, but he had actually realized the truth underlying it – the truth of the indestructibleness of the Self, and of death being nothing but the changing of clothes, and not to be grieved for.

Raja Saheb of Surajpura related to me an incident which he, as a young boy just entering his teens, had occasion to see and which he remembered. Sometime about the year 1902, the late Raja Saheb, the father of the present Raja Saheb, had to pass Arrah on his way from Surajpura to Calcutta. My father, who happened to be connected with the Surajpura Estate as its legal adviser was telegraphed to meet the late Raja Saheb at the Arrah Railway Station. As the only son of Sri Mangal Charan aged eleven years had died of cholera after a brief illness of ten hours that very day, and my father had gone to the Ganges – a distance of ten miles to cremate the body – Sri Mangal Charan went to the station and met the late Raja Saheb. After having conversed for some hours, the late Raja Saheb enquired of Sri Mangal Charan as to where his father was, and why he did not come to see him, and was told that his father had gone to cremate his only son, who had died a few hours before that very day. The late Raja Saheb, as reported by my friend the present Raja Saheb, was struck with amazement at finding Sri Mangal Charan not showing signs of having been the least affected by what indeed was a calamity of losing an only son.

Sri Mangal Charan had indeed attained the perfection of those seers of truth, for whom the unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to be, and who having realized that death of him, who is born, is certain, and the rebirth of him, who is dead, is inevitable, do not grieve for the inevitable event.

Sri Mangal Charan had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. His pursuit of knowledge was not confined to any particular branch. To pass his time among his books was his only hobby. A major portion of what he earned as a result of the most extensive practice, used to be spent over purchase of books. What books he purchased he read. It appears that when he found he had nothing more of consequence to know so far as philosophy of the East and West was concerned, he turned his attention to literature, history and sciences. Volumes of publications, like *International Library of Famous Literature*, *Historians' History of the World*, and *Science in Modern Life*, which I still possess as part of his library which came down to me, bear traces of his deep study of them.

He also had great aptitude for learning languages and mastering them. He had a command over Sanskrit and English, both of which he could speak and write with remarkable ease and fluency. He knew Arabic and Persian equally well. He had started learning French and Latin just before his last illness. It was most remarkable that whatever he read howsoever difficult it was, he never needed the assistance of a teacher.

I remember to have heard Sri Mangal Charan himself relating how he was once misunderstood by an eminent pandit of Benares, Swami Vishudhanand Saraswati. This Swamiji had made special study of Nyaya one of the schools of Hindu philosophy and was considered to be the best authority on the subject. Sri Mangal Charan went to pay his respects to him, and accidentally during the conversation, they happened to be discussing some aspect of Nyaya. Swamiji was struck with the grasp of the subject displayed by Sri Mangal Charanji that he immediately asked under whom he had read his Nyaya. On my brother saying, as the

fact was, that he had read under no guru, Swamiji became angry as he thought that my brother was wrongly concealing the name of his guru.

I remember once my brother impressing upon me that if I were to apply myself and my mind properly to any subject I might be studying, I would find that nothing was too difficult to grasp and required the assistance of a teacher. He related to me as an instance, his own experience. A great pandit, known as Ram Pratapachari, who occasionally used to visit my brother, came from Benares, having read under a well-known scholar, one of the most difficult Sanskrit texts containing criticisms of all the six schools of Hindu philosophy, called *Khandan Khandkhadya*, Achariji was anxious to get a 'vidyarthi', to whom he could impart that knowledge. He asked Sri Mangal Charan, if he would care to read that difficult book, and if so, he said he was ready to give him such assistance as he might need. The following morning Sri Mangal Charan, having studied a passage from the book went to him, and wanted to know if what he had understood as being the import of the passage was correct. Achariji was simply amazed at his power of grasp and told him that he needed no teacher and he could read the book without any assistance.

The vast learning and knowledge, which Sri Mangal Charan possessed, could not possibly be acquired within as short a time as thirty-nine years of the life that he had. The intellectual power he exhibited in assimilating all kinds of knowledge points unmistakably to a highly evolved past life of the soul which reincarnated in his body.

Sri Mangal Charan was not a mere scholar and a thinker. A voracious reader, an original thinker and an ardent teacher, he undoubtedly was, but that was not the whole of him. He was actively associated with, and used to be in the front line of all the movements of the time: social, educational and political.

Sri Mangal Charan lent his full weight to what then was considered the most crying social reform in the matter of

sea-voyage not leading to ostracism of a Hindu from his community. He did not believe in a man's marrying again after he lost his wife. He became a widower at the age of thirty-four, but he did not remarry. He used to say that if the 'patibrat' of Sita was the ideal for a woman, the 'patnibrat' of Rama was to be the ideal for a man.

Sri Mangal Charan had his own original idea of what type of education calculated to bring about a harmonious development of the various faculties of human nature: physical, mental, moral and spiritual, was to be imparted to the children of the soil. He started a Pathshala for teaching Sanskrit, as he held firmly the belief that for proper development of a youth of this country, knowledge of Sanskrit as the base for further education was most essential. The Pathshala, known as Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, is still functioning at Arrah as a Government institution.

He was keenly interested in the upbringing of young men. He, in spite of various engagements, found time to preside over the weekly meetings of the Bihari Young Men's Association and to address young students on various subjects of interest.

Those were the days when the partition of Bengal had led to an upheaval in this country, and agitation for boycott of British and use of Swadeshi goods was in full swing. Sir Surendranath Banerjee, Sri Bipin Pal and Sri Arvindo Ghosh held the field. Sri Mangal Charan threw himself wholeheartedly in the movement. He not only discarded foreign goods and adopted Swadeshi and made others do so, but as Swadeshi goods were then not easily available, he had a sort of emporium established, which procured country-made goods and stocked them for the use of Arrah citizens.

In his political convictions, Sri Mangal Charan was much in advance of his time. The school of political thought to which Sir Surendranath belonged did not so much appeal to his imagination, as the ideology of Sri Bipin Pal, and later, that of Sri Arobindo. As early as then, he talked and dreamt of Swaraj in the sense of complete freedom from

foreign domination. At times he used to be visibly stirred and showed signs of rebellion against the chains of political bondage. Once, when so roused, he gave vent to his feelings in Hindi verse composed impromptu of which, I can just bring myself to quote one stanza from memory.

उठहु वीर अब तजहु नींद भारत के वासी,
देखहु चहु दिशि भयउ काह अब मातु उदासी।
जो रक्षित भई नृप दिलिप रघुराम राजते,
जहि हित पै चैतन्य कृष्ण होई बृज विराजते।
सोइ माता अब दुख भरी,
खड़ी दीन जिमि रोवति।
पराधीनता विपति महं,
डूबि पार नहिं पावति।

Had providence spared Sri Mangal Charan, he would have undoubtedly risen to a very high place in the political firmament, and taken a very prominent and conspicuous part in the movement for emancipation of the country from political subjection.

In the passing away of Sri Mangal Charan, Bihar, nay India, lost not only a profound scholar, a great thinker, a brilliant advocate, a distinguished lawyer and sturdy patriot, but one of whom it can be said, that he had acquired, mastered and reduced to realization the knowledge of the Absolute Self, which had destroyed all darkness and ignorance, by a life entirely devoted to that purpose.

For him, indeed there is no return from whence he has gone.

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः।
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः॥

Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in Him, who are constantly established in identity with and are exclusively devoted to Him, their sins being wiped out by wisdom, go to whence there is no return.

(*Bhagavad Gita*, 5:17)

In publishing these reflections on the philosophy underlying the *Bhagavad Gita* contained in these discourses let us hope that we of the family that survived Sri Mangal Charanji have done our little bit to commemorate his memory. Let us also hope that the truth dilated upon in these discourses will help the reader to acquire jnana and with the weapon of samya to conquer the enemy of ignorance and differentiation and attain oneness with the Absolute Brahma.

I cannot conclude without acknowledging our grateful appreciation of the invaluable help we received from Sri Bageshwar Prasad Sinha, Sri Akhoury Basudoe Narayan Sinha, Sri Raghunath Prasad, Advocate, Sri Rajendra Prasad, MA, BL, and my nephew Sri Ram Chandra Sinha, MA, LLB, Special Officer, Patna City Municipality, in seeing this publication through the press. We are conscious that the printing, and the get up of the book leave much to be desired and that there are mistakes, apart from what is called printer's devil, which could have been well avoided. The reason is, that the work of publication was undertaken under many handicaps and it was realized that an attempt at perfection might have unduly delayed its production. It is hoped that if the book succeeds in catching the mind of the thinking public and there is a demand for it, a very much improved second edition of the book will very soon be forthcoming.

—Mahabir Prasad, Judge, High Court,
Patna, 6 November 1948

Preface

(Second Edition)

In response to a demand from the reading public, a second edition of the book is being brought out. The attempt has been made to improve the printing and to remove the errors which had crept into the printing of the first edition which was published rather in a hurry and under many handicaps. It is hoped that the printing and the get up of the second edition of the book will be to the satisfaction of the reading public.

—*Mahabir Prasad, Advocate-General, Bihar,*
Patna, 27 February 1958

Preface

(Third Edition)

The second edition of Sri Mangal Charan's *Discourses on the Philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita* has been handed over to Yoga Publications Trust for republication in a third edition. The depth of understanding and originality of interpretation found in these discourses is a rare tribute to the art of philosophical discourse.

Sri Mangal Charan has the skill to maintain the thread of complex concepts with lucidity and ease. Thus, he is able to take the reader into the world of Sri Krishna's teaching.

Where necessary the third edition preserved the intention of the second edition to remove errors and present the text to today's reading public in a clear and unambiguous manner.

Sixty-seven years after the first publication, the *Discourses* emerge again and continue to inspire and instruct the reader, for the wisdom of the *Bhagavad Gita* remains a timeless treasure for all ages.

This edition is being published at the request of Sri Karunanidhan Keshav, a distant relation of late Sri Mangal Charan. Yoga Publications Trust is pleased to produce this edition in memory of the author. The content of the discourses does not necessarily reflect the tradition and teaching of the Bihar School of Yoga and its masters.

Yoga Publications Trust has not received any remuneration for the printing of this edition which is purely for free distribution as prasada.

Philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita

DISCOURSE 1

Introduction

The philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* commences from Chapter 2, sloka 11. The main cause of Arjuna's despondency was the affection he felt for his own kinsmen who he thought were likely to be killed if he were to engage in the battle. He was, therefore, most reluctant to engage in a warfare of this kind. According to his idea of good, it must have led to the most deplorable results and caused him sorrow, dejection and misery. All this was based on the idea that his nearest and dearest relations would be no more.

Sri Krishna in his reply would first teach Arjuna that there was no such thing as real death and therefore, his grief for his kinsmen was not proper. In teaching this philosophy of immortality he would have to expound on the immortal nature of the soul and thence, he would proceed to point out what ought to be the conduct of one who aspires after this knowledge. At the end, he would point out that one who wants to attain knowledge of the self or soul has to place his entire energy at the service of the cause of righteousness, which flows from the inherent nature of the soul or self.

This sacrifice will take the form of a particular activity according to the environments one is placed in, and the capacities and powers one possesses. As far as Arjuna was concerned, he was placed in an environment where the righteous cause of Yudhishtira called for his hearty support at the sacrifice, even of his life in case of need. His capacities

and powers and his special martial training, which were those of a first class *kshatriya* or warrior, all pointed to him that he ought to engage in the righteous battle for placing Yudhishtira, the very incarnation of righteousness, on the throne, and for dethroning the usurper Duryodhana, the very personification of unrighteousness.

The mere sentimental considerations that those who commanded the love and respect of Arjuna had to be opposed and fought against ought not to have had any influence on him, who wanted to live the life of a true aspirant after the knowledge of the soul. The first condition demanded of such an aspirant is that he must not be false to his own Inmost Self, which is infinite holiness and love and which utterly abhors unrighteousness as being quite contrary to its nature. Sri Krishna, therefore, begins with the words, "You are grieving for things that ought not be grieved for," meaning that an aspirant after true knowledge ought never care for existence or non-existence, for life or death, for the forms of things or objective appearances. He ought to concentrate his entire energy upon the essence that lies beneath as the substratum or the soul of the entire world of existence. He ought to think of his Inmost Self, the only true reality, and to be true to it in all his actions, however strongly opposed he might be by external circumstances and however disastrous the external circumstances and the consequences might appear to him.

The principle is that the entire world of experience can never exist as such unless there is behind it an experienter, a perceiver, a knower, or a seer. It might be thought by some, that the world of things evolves in the course of time, a knower out of it, by the action and interaction of forces working within it under the guidance of certain laws of nature, but the entire conception of a world with forces working within it is one which can only be formed by a knower. To place this conception before a knower has come into being, would be like placing the cart before the horse, and utterly illogical and unreasonable.

There can be no escape from the fact that the world as known to us and as felt by us cannot be what it is without a knower behind it as its ultimate substratum. This knower must be from its very nature beyond all objective knowledge, beyond all objective perception, beyond all objective cognition. It must be from its very nature, always unlimited as being only the substratum of all that is: unconditioned as being itself the condition of all conditions, infinite as comprehending within its knowledge all the finites, and absolute as being beyond all possible relation with the entire world of experience; only supporting it from behind as the ultimate foundation of the entire fabric of our experience, as the a priori condition of all experience, but never itself coming within the world of experience. This has to be grasped and realized in order to see what is taught in the slokas that follow.

In the following sloka *Natvevaham . . .*, Sri Krishna says that neither He nor Arjuna, nor all the kings that were assembled there, were ever non-existent in the past, nor can ever be non-existent in future. Their real essence, being the Absolute Knower or seer, is ever permanent. What they merely seem to be as so many finite modes of the Absolute is ever only in the seeming and never permanent. So it comes to this: what really is, namely the Absolute, can never cease to be and what really is not, but only seem to be, namely the forms or the various manifestations can never really be but at the same time, can never cease to seem to be. Thus the forms shall ever be in the seeming, and the essence, the Reality, the Absolute shall ever be in the being or be-ness. The forms as such must ever be varying and always trying to approach the be-ness of the Absolute but never succeeding in completely approaching it.

This existence of the Absolute Be-ness and Absolute Seeming-ness, if we may be permitted to call it so, is due to the fact that there can be no absolute be-ness or existence without self-consciousness or awareness of its own existence. In order to be absolute it must be self-sufficient. If it were

supposed to be unaware of its own existence, it would be necessary for it to be known by someone outside it, thus its existence can mean nothing if it is not known by anyone. It would be a dependent thing – dependent for its sustenance upon another who knows it. That would be conceiving the Absolute without its absoluteness. So, it is essential that the Absolute must be self-conscious. It must know itself or assert its existence to itself that it is. It ought to be self-contained. It is not something else beside itself, it is itself, or in terms of self-consciousness, the Absolute must assert its existence to itself as ‘I am myself’.

Its self-containedness, self-sufficiency, unconditionedness, absoluteness and infiniteness necessarily imply that its consciousness can have its own self as its object and nothing other than it or outside it. If we suppose that anything other than itself enters into its consciousness and is known or cognized by it, we shall have to suppose that this other, in order to be real, must have an existence of its own independent and absolute existence. In order to have a real and independent existence, this other must know, feel and realize its own existence by, in, and of itself. Being such, it is its own knower, having an absolute self-consciousness of its own. As such it is an Absolute of itself, out of all relation to the Absolute whose other we have supposed it to be. This other, then, cannot be the known of the Absolute according to the supposition with which we have started.

The supposition then lands us into the absurd position of assuming two absolutes and infinities limiting each other, conditioning each other and standing in relation to each other. It brings us to the self-contradictory and utterly inconsistent position of assuming the infinite to be finite or forming the conception of a finite infinite, relative absolute. There can be no escape from the position, therefore, that the knower of the Absolute can, as such, be none other than the Absolute itself, its own objective form or phase, standing as a counterpart to the ultimate subjective phase or form of the knower. The known cannot be supposed to be the knower,

unless we suppose the known and the knower to be mere forms or modes of the Absolute Reality, standing behind and realizing itself to itself as the transcendent unity summing up within it as the moments of its life, both the knower and the known.

The position then that the Absolute as the knower can have as the known something other than itself, is utterly untenable for taking any view of the situation. If the known be its own knower, existing to itself, it can be nothing other than the Absolute, other than whom it has been wrongly supposed to be. For, in order to 'other' itself, it must have some differentiating elements to be the basis of setting itself apart from the Absolute from which it has to differentiate itself. Insofar as it knows itself by, in, and of itself, it is not different from the Absolute but one with it. Or the absoluteness of the Absolute lies in its independent self-realization, its consciousness of itself, by and of itself. If any other differentiating element is supposed to be introduced, the question would arise as to whether this new element belongs to this 'other' as an element of its nature. It has been supposed by some that this 'other' is limited, conditioned and finite. If this limitedness, conditionedness or finiteness appertains to its being, it necessarily follows that this 'being' of the 'other' is not of itself. In order to be what it is, it must have another being to limit it and condition it. It would not, then, have any being of its own, but its 'beingness' depends upon another being. It then has no existence of its own, and its existence depends upon another being or existence for its maintenance.

In short, it derives its sustaining power from another being and in truth whatever 'beingness' it has is only derived or a derivative and not its own. Such being the case, it cannot be said to be really other than the being from which it derives its existence and through, of, and in which it maintains its existence. It cannot be said to be a 'being' in reality, but only to be a manifestation, a mode of the 'being' through which it derives its existence and continues to live.

The differentiating elements, whatever they may supposed to be, if it is of the nature of the finite, the limited and the conditioned, cannot have any being of its own. It must exist only as a form, mode, or manifestation of another, which alone can exist of and by itself. The differentiating element, thus being eliminated out of the realm of true and real existence, the 'other' as existing of itself, cannot be supposed to be other than the Absolute but substantially identical with it. The position is therefore unavoidable that the known can in no case be other than the knower in reality. It must necessarily be identical with it in substance, essence and being, and only appears to be different in form or seemingness.

What we want to be borne in mind here especially is that the ever-permanent Absolute, the immutable background of the phenomenal universe, ever remains the same. Insofar as man is real, that is, insofar as he is permanent, he is one with that principle and is ever free from death and destruction. In order to be ever conscious of this truth he must be in thought, word and deed, acting up to the high ideal of one who realizes his unity with that eternal principle and is not mindful of his own interests, comforts and conveniences. Rather, he is ever impelled by the inherent activity of universal compassion or universal love manifesting in him unobstructed now as he sees his own self in its eternal majesty and glory, which is the underlying principle of all beings. It does not need anything outside itself; feeling happy and blissful and able to be realized by all, if all could act according to the dictates of *dharma* or the inspirations of one's highest self. Thus, Bhagavan emphasizes the fact that there is no such thing as death in reality, that is to say, you will never cease to be what you are in reality – or that which in you is ever saying to itself, 'I am', in the midst of infinite variations both inside and outside would never cease to say to itself 'I am'.

The changes of the body need not deter you. You are aware of the fact that the body was once that of a boy, then

that of a grownup man, and then that of an old man. The body has passed through all these changes without any change in your idea of self-existence or consciousness that 'You are'. There is no cessation of this 'I-am-ness'. If for this old body, which is undoubtedly a different one in comparison to the body you had when you were a child, a new body were substituted, it would bring no change to your inner consciousness of self-identity. Just as the consciousness of self-identity spreads continuously up to old age, so it extends into the next life. No wise man or one who can take a dispassionate view of the affairs of the world or one who can keep himself unruffled amidst various dark misfortunes should be deluded by the idea that what is known as death can really bring about a cessation of the perception of self-identity, which alone lies at the basis of self-existence (2:13).

There is one thing that can work as an obstruction on the path of one who even realizes the deathlessness of his inner self, it is the fear that although one's real principle of life is changeless and deathless, still if he tries to face the difficult situations of the world and lead a life of purity and holiness, of self-devotion to duty or dharma, he would have to undergo great hardship, privations, suffering and misfortunes. Bhagavan however, reminds us again that these ordinary pains and pleasures do not really touch our inner being. Their contact or influence does not go deeper than the body of our senses, hence they are *matrasparsha*. Their character will appear to us clearly if we reflect upon their nature deeply, however strongly we may be affected by physical pain. As soon as we go to sleep their perception vanishes, thus showing us that if they had really penetrated into the inner nature of our being we would have carried them inside and even in the state of deep sleep we could not have been free from them on any account. Moreover, they are ever coming into being and going out of being, and thus always showing their transitoriness, so there is no use in troubling ourselves about these pains and pleasures.

We have to realize the fact that they are outsiders only touching the superficial coating of our being. If we stand firm, not minding them, we shall be able to maintain our equanimity in the midst of great physical sufferings and misfortunes when we have taken upon ourselves the task of liberating ourselves from the bondage of death and change, to attain the state of perfect freedom from all limitations whatsoever and to be one with the universal life, the universal soul or the Absolute. The Lord then enjoins Arjuna to be ready to bear up the pairs of opposites or the pleasures and pains of the world by the strength of a strong resolution within him and not to mind them when they stand in the way of attainment of the highest object of immortality and liberation. This is to be done by repeatedly thinking or meditating upon the transitoriness of external sufferings and misfortunes (2:15).

The reason we cannot face the misfortunes of the world boldly is because it appears to us that our own existence is threatened and the misfortunes may reduce us to nothingness. We forget that if we do really exist, nothing can make us cease to exist. Existence and non-existence, being and non-being, are quite contradictory conceptions. Existence, or being from its own nature, can never be non-being or non-existence, for to suppose that existence can become non-existence is to suppose that what becomes non-existence was never really in existence, but it might have appeared to us as existence. For if existence was really in it, if it was existing in itself, apart from any relative existence that might have been imposed upon it, that is, if it has had existence absolute and unconditioned, there could not be imagined anything to deprive it of that existence. It was its own nature and thus bound to be eternally with it.

What we see before us when we see a thing going out of existence is not the real existence of the thing becoming non-existence but the appearance of it, which it had superimposed on it in relation to its surroundings, going out of appearance in accordance with certain laws obtained

in the sphere of relative appearances. We, however, have always to distinguish the mere appearance of a thing from what it really is. The appearance depends for its being on something, which causes it to appear in some particular form or shape to some other, but as soon as that other is gone or its surroundings are changed, it must cease to be what it appeared to be before. A father cannot be a father without children with respect to whom his fatherhood exists. The destruction of fatherhood in the absence of children does not mean the destruction of the man himself. He has his real being which was superimposed with the character of a father when it came into relation with the children. So, the various attributes or qualities that we see in the objects all around us appear to us as attributes only in relation to their surrounding phenomena.

If we do away with the surrounding sphere and with the senses that impose their particular attributes upon the objects, the appearances of the object must go out of existence; they were dependent upon the senses and surrounding phenomena for appearing in their various attributes. This taking away of their apparent form does not deprive them of the real being or their being in themselves, over which the relativity of appearance was superimposed. This 'being in itself' of the entire universe is beyond the world of relativity and must ever exist. Its existence is ever in itself and does not depend upon anything outside itself for its maintenance and support, and thus it can never be taken away or destroyed. Lord Sri Krishna enunciates in Chapter 2, sloka 16 this philosophy of 'absolute being', by saying that non-existence or non-being can never have being or existence; and existence or being can never become non-being. These two, 'being' and 'non-being', stand asunder; those who see the reality have fathomed the nature of both.

It might be urged here that some thinkers like Hegel and others think that reality does not lie in mere being or non-being but it contains both as moments in its constitution. The real is neither being nor non-being but it is that which is both

being and non-being; the one that is the being ever moving into non-being and again coming back to itself. They explain the existence of the universe as neither being nor non-being, rather it has both as moments in its own life. The question is, what is meant by being and non-being as conceived by those thinkers? The very proposition that being moves into non-being makes it clear that being is not absolute being or 'be-ness', which Hegel, according to his own view, evolves later on. But being in relativity or being as opposed to non-being, this being then cannot have existence of its own. Its existence must depend on its ever moving into, connecting itself, or merging into non-being and coming again to itself.

This is dependent existence, conditioned existence, and not the real existence which is the subject matter of our discourse. We are not in quest of an existence that exists only because of some other, however wide and general it may be. That would only be relative existence. Hegel does not go beyond relative existence. His notion containing both being and non-being as moments in it cannot be absolute. It depends upon its moments or elements, the being and non-being, which are in relativity for its being. It has no being of itself and in itself. It cannot be urged that we cannot go beyond relative existence, though we cannot hold within our mental grasp the absolute existence for our being. Capable of doing so would irresistibly point to that existence being not absolute but relative. At the same time, the relative existence points irresistibly to the absolute existence as the basis of all relations. For it is irresistibly indicated that the relations or relative existences cannot exist of themselves and they cannot be supposed to be baseless as some have thought them to be. Thus, existence in relation points strongly and conclusively to existence in itself as the basis or *adhisthana* of the entire world of relation.

Now the question is, what can this basis be? This much is sure: it must be perfectly independent, unconditioned and absolute. The entire world of appearances with its root, whatever name we may give it – the notion of Hegel, or the

maya of the Vedantins, or the prakriti of the Samkhyas – must have the absolute and unconditioned existence as its basis. One thing is also necessary. This absolute existence cannot be in the region of ‘not self’, for the ‘not-self’ or the objective world cannot be independent of the self or the subjective world. It can only be in the region of the self, and we can only attain to it if we reach the Self, which is ever conscious of itself without the support of anything outside it, and so is absolute and infinite. This Absolute Self may appear to need the relation of the ‘not-self’ for its own self-consciousness. If it only posits the ‘not self’ as a supposed counterpart to its realization of its own consciousness, however, mere positing or asserting the ‘not-self’ cannot give to the ‘not-self’ any real existence and cannot deprive this Absolute Self of actual existence in itself.

The Absolute Self cannot but be in itself, and this being in itself of it, cannot but for its own self throw out the suggestion or hint of the ‘not-self’. This suggestion or hint of the ‘not-self’ which it throws out becomes the *maya*, or the root of all future suggestions of the thought activity that emerges out of the self-realizing consciousness of the Absolute. It is called prakriti, maya or notion, and by its own movement it spreads out the entire panorama of the universe. That which really exists in this vast panorama as the foundation of all, as having spread all this and as pervading all this, is that Absolute Self, ever beyond destruction and beyond all change, and so it has been described in Chapter 2, sloka 17. Its various bodies or coverings that arise on account of the activity of prakriti or maya or the ‘not-self’ suggestion are, from their very nature of having come out of the mere objective suggestion of the absolute, without any foundation, false and ever changing; their root, the suggestion of the ‘not-self’, being non-substantial, non-existing and unreal.

Realizing this, one has to be above the fear of destruction of what is already destructible by its very nature. Because the entire universe made up of relative appearances, devoid of real being, depending only on ‘others’ for their appearances,

and having no being of their own, it is foolish to expect it to be real and permanent. Its being is only apparent and relative. It derives its support from the groundless suggestion of the Absolute Self and so it is bound to give way and in due course to appear in its true colour of non-existence and non-being; or rather the world of objects must be appearing to come into being and go out of being. That which is inherent in the nature of a thing cannot be prevented from showing itself by any means whatsoever.

Wisdom requires that we must realize from before the possibilities of existence and non-existence. We must realize from before what really exists and what does not exist and wherein consists the existence of what seems to exist. We must regard the appearance, the *dehas* or bodies, as not existing, as dead corpses from before, so that we may not make ourselves miserable by sorrowing when their false nature manifests itself and they vanish and cease to be. That which is only apparent is 'never in being' and we ought to have wisdom enough not to be deluded in regarding them as having being. The faintest idea that there is any existence in the universe of phenomena has the effect of upsetting us when confronted with the woes and miseries of the world.

We are preparing ourselves for the great struggle of mastering and conquering the various passions and weaknesses of our nature and attaining absolute existence which is our real self.

This struggle requires equipoise of mind, firmness of disposition and perfect peace within us, unattainable if we allow ourselves to remain in the illusion that the world of appearance exists. This world of appearances would ever be telling us most eloquently that it is not; and so our life would be made of numerous disappointments, harassments, troubles and woes, and make us unfit to overcome our weaknesses and attain perfection. Our duty is to stand firm in the field of battle with a strong determination to achieve victory and to vanquish the enemies of lust, anger, avarice, various passions, desires, and then, the great enemy of

ignorance, which hides from us our own real, glorious self, the absolute, the unconditioned self which reigns supreme, enjoying the bliss of its own swaraj.

This kingdom of our Absolute Self has been usurped as it were by ignorance or blindness, by Dhritarashtra, the great usurper, blind king, and his hundred offspring, the various passions and desires of human nature. The soul is enjoined to fit itself by looking upon this world of shows as unreal and non-existent and to fight out the battle, for which, like Arjuna, it has stood up by receiving instructions in respect to spiritual warfare through Sri Krishna, the Divine reason or buddhi (as Sruti says: *buddhim tu sarathimviddhi*). Sloka 18 says that these various bodies of the eternal Absolute Self, which is ever indestructible, immeasurable and infinite, are by their very nature destructible or *antwant*, literally, 'coming to an end'. That being so, you are not to bestow the least care or anxiety of yours upon them but rise up and fight.

In slokas 19–25, it is emphatically asserted that this seer in all bodies, the Absolute, is ever indestructible and immortal; it is ever beyond all change; it never comes into birth or begins to be; it never comes to an end or ceases to be. From its very nature it is ever free, unconditioned, infinite and absolute. Once this truth is realized in its fullness, it becomes impossible for one to be subject to death and decay.

All changes that take place are attributed to the phenomenal modifications of the ever-active energy of the absolute, the *prakriti*. The soul is realized as the eternal seer standing apart, witnessing disinterestedly the incessantly flowing stream of phenomena by which it ever remains untouched and unaffected. When this point of development is reached, that is, when by constant practice of inward meditation upon the truth of this principle or proposition, the inner consciousness attains to its own free and unconditioned state. It becomes impossible to be unconscious of our own real self-existence.

At present, as ordinary human beings, we do not realize our own nature of a free and infinite Self. Rather, we

experience ourselves subject to the varying storms of passions and emotions which throw us into unconsciousness, every now and then making us lose ourselves in fits of senselessness when overcome by lust, anger, covetousness, etc. That is the reason why unconsciousness of our own self increases within us and on rare occasions, by extreme efforts of contemplative thought, we succeed in realizing momentarily our true nature.

But the greater portion of our existence is made up of passions, emotions and various forms of unconsciousness and self-forgetfulness so we feel ourselves undergoing all the changes that prakriti and its modifications undergo. We find ourselves undergoing the woeful miseries of life, birth and death, which do not really belong to our nature.

The realization of the truth taught here and constant meditation upon it would plant us in the region of real self-consciousness by carrying us beyond the sphere of self-forgetfulness. Our own nature will remain quite unaffected when we can consciously look upon the changes of birth and death as concerned only with the outer coverings or sheaths, which are the modifications of our own thought activity or prakriti lying ever apart from us. To such a one, death ceases to be death. He is ever inwardly conscious even when birth or death is taking place. It is to him only like changing old clothes for new ones, because he can die consciously and take birth consciously. The attainment of infinite consciousness, when death and birth cease altogether, comes later on which will be dealt with hereafter.

Therefore, Bhagavan Sri Krishna says in sloka 22 that to him who realizes the indestructibility of the self, death is nothing but the changing of clothes. This self being immortal and indestructible, unthinkable and unchangeable, incapable of being burnt, drowned, dried up or cut to pieces, this self being all-pervading, eternal, ever fixed and immovable, should never be grieved for. Even if it is said that this self is subject to birth and death or is ever coming into being or going into non-being, still it ought not to be grieved

for. For, if its very nature is destructible, no effort on our part can prevent it from destruction. It is foolish to grieve for a thing which cannot be obtained. Taking any view you like, you must be above grief, above sorrow, above lamentation. The only question for you ought to be how to keep to the path of your duty, quite regardless of whether all those you hold dear to yourself would live or die. You cannot prevent nature from taking its course. The law goes on.

All these things that you see around you have sprung from the invisible; only temporarily do they appear as visible. They must necessarily go back into the invisible again, for nothing can prevent them from becoming what they have ever been, that is to say, from becoming invisible again. Why then should you lament unnecessarily; for what necessarily inheres in the nature of things is not their inward, inherent nature, nor would they ever remain so. The entire universe of things is ever rushing on towards becoming merged in the invisible. Time-perception is nothing. It leaves no real trace in you, for it is only an illusory shadow thrown upon you by the successive stream of phenomena that passes in your mental vision.

It does not matter at all whether the world of things merges into the invisible today or tomorrow. The merging is sure and certain, and the realization of this fact alone must put you above all grief and lamentation. Wonderful is this perception of the ever rushing on of things towards invisibleness; wonderful is the person who speaks of it and wonderful is the person who hears of it. Very few can really grasp the situation even when it is explained to them. There is nowhere any sure and stable ground. The entire universe with its variegated phenomena of things which appear so solid, so substantial before you, is nothing but a stream of appearances running into nothingness or invisibleness, losing itself into utter void and emptiness.

Time, being nothing, can be left out of consideration altogether. What becomes of the universe then? It has merged into nothingness, leaving no trace behind, all gone, but you – the self, the seer, the subjective background of

the appearing and disappearing universe – must remain. The universe has no truths beyond its appearing and disappearing, but it has as its necessary condition, the condition that makes it possible to appear and disappear. This eternal self of yours, as the necessary condition of the appearance of the universe, must ever remain indestructible, imperishable, eternal and absolute. So never be sorry for this eternal self. Stand up and do your duty. Do that which wells up within you as your appointed task according to the circumstances you are placed in, the capabilities you are possessed of and the powers that have been bestowed on you.

The root of duty is the realization of this real Self of yours which is above all changes and miseries and which is the self of all beings in this universe. The entire world of beings is subject to innumerable miseries of existence and the only way to rid them of this miserable existence is to make them realize this eternal self of theirs, the abode of all bliss and peace. The only necessary condition for realization of the self is the prevalence of righteousness and the suppression of unrighteousness. Everyone who succeeds even in catching a glimpse, even a mere passing glimpse of the glory of the eternal self, cannot but feel it is his duty to make all attain to the same point of realization. His own inner nature makes him feel called upon to help in the cause of righteousness by doing to the utmost of his power, whatever he can in that direction. The brahmin, or one who is spiritually or mentally great, would feel it is his duty or the requirement of his Inmost Self, that he should help the cause of righteousness by his mental and spiritual strength. The kshatriya or the man with the strength of his character, body and will, would lend all his strength to the scale of righteousness and fight out its cause at the sacrifice even of his own life. The vaishya would offer all his material possessions to the service of the cause, and the shudra would not grudge his labour to promote the cause that must be dear to the heart of every spiritually-minded man.

Arjuna was a typical kshatriya. Yudhishtira, the type of righteousness, had been dethroned, and Duryodhana,

the type of unrighteousness, had usurped all authority. The problem was how to restore the rule of righteousness, and Sri Krishna calls on the typical kshatriya to enter deep into his real self and meditate upon what ought to be his attitude on that occasion. Thousands, nay millions, who had sided with the usurper and the unrighteous ruler would have to be slain no doubt, but the rule of righteousness could not be restored without this enormous bloodshed. The question is, what ought to be done? The path is clear. Destruction or disappearance of things is not something to be taken into consideration on such occasions. Things are destructible of their own nature. What is permanent and subsisting is the realization of the eternal self and that which leads to it, the righteousness, must be upheld and supported. No price is too dear for it.

Arjuna must offer himself at the altar of the cause of righteousness; his self, his own Inmost Self, demands it as its dharma or real nature. So he is exhorted by Sri Krishna to rise up as a good and heroic kshatriya, to engage in the battle to vindicate the cause of righteousness, to destroy the enemies of justice and virtue, to install on the throne the righteous ruler Yudhishtira for the good of his country and the whole world. There can be no higher duty for a kshatriya than to fight for the cause of righteousness, and most fortunate is he amongst kshatriyas, who finds an opportunity of laying down his life at the altar of righteousness by supporting the just cause of the weak against the strong; by freeing the world from oppression and misrule; by delivering his country from the hands of a usurper and oppressor. There can be no greater misfortune to a kshatriya than to see the people of the world or his country being oppressed by a tyrant and an unrighteous ruler without exerting his utmost to set things right. So Sri Krishna advises Arjuna not to give way to the weakness of human nature, to mere sentimentality, to mere dread of bloodshed, but to be strong and courageous, to be bold, to face the situation, to have a firm moral grasp of what the situation demands of him and

thus to be up and doing what he ought to do as a kshatriya on that occasion.

“Don’t allow it to be said,” Bhagavan said to Arjuna, “that you were weak and a coward, and so you left the field of battle. All your glory would be gone, utter disgrace would be your fate, your name would be dishonoured, and it is better to meet death than to live a dishonourable life. There is no other alternative but to fight it out. If you die in the field of battle, heaven stands with its doors unfolded to welcome you; if you succeed and gain victory, the kingdom of the earth is yours and you would have attained the great objective of restoring righteousness itself, Dharmaraja Yudhishtira, to its legitimate throne.”

Arjuna also stands for the soul that is ready to do battle in order to recover its own spiritual kingdom or swaraj from the hands of the enemies of human nature: the blind ignorance and its innumerable descendants such as the vices, the passions. It has difficulty understanding the position that after it has killed ignorance with all the passions that accompany it, it would still have an existence worth striving for. Existence without passions, without emotions, appears worthless to it and it is afraid even of its own destruction in the attempt. The passions are so dear to it that it does not like to kill them. When it realizes the true nature of the eternal self and that this self cannot recover its own kingdom of eternal bliss unless these enemies are destroyed, it finds its duty to be the destruction of ignorance with its various branches and manifestations such as lust, avarice, anger. It gets the inspiration from on High, the inspiration from the divine reason, the Sri Krishna within us, that it is our duty to kill the passions and vices of our nature. If we succeed in the attempt, the divine swaraj is ours, the supreme kingdom of peace and bliss. If we fail, still for having made the attempt we cannot but rise to the higher worlds, the plane of swarga. Whence, after enjoying the happiness of the plane, we shall come back to complete the course commenced by us and ultimately win back the spiritual kingdom of peace and

bliss: the final and complete realization of the infinite, the unconditioned and the Absolute Self (sloka 36).

The view that has been expounded so far belongs to the Samkhya school of philosophy. It bases itself on the view of what is real, true and permanent, requires us to give up what is unreal, untrue, transitory and changing as false by a strong mental effort, or rather a spiritual effort. Then it asks us to be inwardly peaceful while all the external energies of our nature are naturally, as it were, dedicated to the service of righteousness. This is a very difficult feat to be accomplished by ordinary people however. It is the glory of the few highly-advanced souls that can aspire to the wonderful accomplishment of this task by simple effort of the will, backed by the strength of reason.

Ordinary souls require to be gradually trained by a systematic course of discipline to attain the perfection calculated to be achieved by the Samkhya school of teaching. Moreover, the Samkhya school emphasizes the attitude or the method of giving up the false more than that of substituting the less true by the more true. Samkhya looks upon the entire world of appearances as nothing but false and therefore not worth even a moment's consideration. Samkhya teaches that the world of appearances ought to be thrown aside once and for all and never allowed to stand before the inward vision even for a moment.

The other school of yoga, realizing these difficulties on the path of an aspirant, asks us to subject ourselves to a course of discipline and impresses upon us the view that, although the world of appearance is nothing but false, still its various departments or branches have relative truth in them. The lower branches of the tree of the universe have come out of the higher branches. The bhu loka, for instance, being an evolution out of the bhuvah loka, has as its relative cause the bhuvah standing behind it, which in its turn would have the swarga loka as its casual substratum.

So the effort of the aspirant must be to proceed step by step to catch hold of the lower manifestations and resolve

them back into the higher ones, their casual substrata which are, comparatively speaking, more true than their lower manifestations. Thus by gradually rising higher and higher by a systematic course of training, the effort must be to be able to arrive at the highest plane where the thought energy of the Absolute, Prakriti, has the entire tree of the universe resolved back into it as the seed lying behind it. Then it will become possible to enter into the realization of the Absolute Self, the eternal Lord of the universe, as the absolute substratum of the universal Prakriti.

In this course of training, the mind has to pass from the lower to the higher, at each step taking hold of some principle which is higher than what it has given up but only relatively true, and will have to be given up after further progress is attained, until the highest principle, the eternal self, is attained. It does not, like Samkhya, attempt to give up all principles except the Absolute self as false and untrue, for it is not capable of doing this all at once.

Here Sri Krishna refers to this school of philosophy which, he says, he is going to expound after having established the absoluteness, the unconditionedness and the infiniteness of the Eternal Self according to the Samkhya School. He says that the method advocated by the teachings of yoga is calculated to slacken the bonds of karma and so to gradually lead to their utter destruction, which is a condition necessary for the attainment of absolute freedom by the soul. The reason is that the condition or the state of existence that a man occupies at a particular moment is determined by his past mental activities and their consequences, physical actions. Man having got into the ignorant attitude that he is finite, limited and conditioned, necessarily falls into the snare of desires that seems calculated to raise him out of this pit of finiteness into the region of forgetfulness of the finiteness or limitedness, though it might be only for the time being.

The real evil was born there: the getting into the idea that he is not the seer but the seen, not the knower but the

known, and thus becoming identified with limitedness, the changefulness, the transitoriness and the miserableness of the seen and the known.

This temporary overshadowing of the ignorance is necessary for the self-realization of the Eternal Self as the absolute self-conscious being. Thus the temporary eclipse, as it were, of the glory of the divine being, apparent and unreal though it is, has to be accepted and we ought to find our way out of it to our Eternal Self. The one great obstruction towards our attainment of the goal is the activity of the mind, which is generally based upon the conception that we are limited, finite and individualized, existing as individual units separate from the entire world of existence. This world manifests itself into the various and manifold actions, the karmas. They cannot but in their turn strengthen the attitude of the mind which they are based upon and proceed from, viz. the attitude that we are finite and limited, conditioned and individualized, separate entities, having our own interests apart from the entire world of existence.

Thus each realization of the activity of the mind or will makes us more and more individualized, bound and limited according to the inherent nature of thought activity. This is said to be the fettering power of karma or *karmabandha*. Each activity, mental or physical – though we need not consider the physical separately as it is only an effect of the mental – has the necessary consequence of moulding our inward nature in the course of time after its own shape. All our future as well as present wellbeing or otherwise depends entirely upon the shape, the structure, the strength and the character of our inward nature.

This principle lies at the root of the law of karma or karmaphala. We can very well understand that we cannot be active without producing changes in our inward nature, which must in their turn lead to consequences calculated to make us well or ill. So, one who tries to acquire freedom and to realize the absoluteness and the infiniteness of the inner self has to take care that his mental, moral and physical

activities or his karma may not be forging fetters to bind him down to the condition of a finite and limited being. For, the force of karma in accordance with its own laws would be so great that, if he lets it take its own course, all his attempts at realizing his true self would be frustrated; it would be impossible for him to give up all activities. So while working towards attainment of freedom, his natural activities that spring from the relations and circumstances as placed in this world, proceed upon the assumption that he is the seen and the known, the body and the faculties, the passions and the emotions. Woe be unto him, his fate is sealed. He becomes more and more individualized and enslaved and in the course of time, the bonds of karma become so tight and fetter him so strongly that it becomes next to impossible for him to get rid of them.

Lord Sri Krishna requires us to guard ourselves against this danger. The only way to escape from the binding or fettering nature of karma is not to act with a view to serve our separate, selfish, individualized interests, but with a view to serve the interest of the entire world of existence, to free this world from the bond of ignorance by leading it on to the path of righteousness; by always turning a deaf ear to the suggestions of our carnal nature, the passions, the emotions, the hankerings of the senses; by ever readily listening to the voice of our inward higher nature which unites us to the entire universe of existence, to the entire world of beings, by the bonds of love and sympathy. There is that in us, the true self of ours, which is the self in every being and it is this oneness of the Self that makes us love and sympathize with all in the first instance, unless and until our imaginary self-interest intervenes and converts our friends into our enemies.

Love springs of itself when there is nothing to obstruct its course. Hatred or enmity always has some cause behind it. There can be no enmity without any reason, though we can understand very well the existence of love without any particular reason behind it. So what we have to do in order

to deprive the karma of its poisonous effect of making us individualized and limited is to make it (karma) proceed not from the love of the separate entity we imagine our tiny self to be, but from the love of the entire universe of being: the universal compassion based upon the realization of inner unity of all existence. The centre of that existence being the inmost *swa* or self in us all, which is uniting us in bonds of love with all that we see around us; this centre of the *swa* being the principle to be referred to in cases of need as it always points us to the path of righteousness possible for us according to the stage of development attained by us.

Thus making the basis of our karma the obedience to the dictates of our Inmost Self, is action in yoga, *yogastha* or action in union, with the principle of unity and love, the divine principle in us, which is calculated to leave us free from the taints of karma, to prevent karma from forging fetters for us; to strengthen the attitude of universal love and compassion which is calculated to lead us to the realization of the Eternal Self.

This Eternal Self in manifestation is said to be the *yajna*, the divine principle of unity, love and sympathy. Our activities in union with him and for his sake, regardless of all consequences to our individual self, are calculated to lead us to him and free us from the bondage of karma. This Eternal Self which we realize as the seer, the knower, the cognizer, of the universe, is the *Ishwara* of the yoga school of philosophy. Samkhya does not speak about this principle (in manifestation in relation to the objective universe) as it emphasizes giving up that which is false, which cannot but necessarily lead to the realization of that which is true.

Thus Samkhya leads to the realization of Brahma not by telling us what Brahma is but by telling us, as it were, what it is not and thus indirectly leading us to the ultimate realization of Brahma, the eternal subjective side of the ever-changing, objective, phenomenal universe. It takes up the universe as it is, cuts it up or analyzes it into its component elements, reduces these elements or *mahabhootas* into still

subtler principles, the *tanmatras* that underlie them. It takes up the tanmatras, then reduces them into their common essential principle, the ahamkara, which is further pushed back into the *mahat* or the universal discriminative principle – the reason standing behind. This again is made to go back into the universal thought activity, the Prakriti, the three-sided or *trigunatmika* Prakriti. Thence the *Purusha*, or the eternal Seer, is realized as standing beyond all these various manifestations of the Prakriti, standing quite unconcerned as the essential and necessary condition of the activity of the Prakriti. Purusha remains absolutely unmodified and untouched in its essential nature by the modifications that the Prakriti or thought activity undergoes.

The thought activity of the Prakriti and all its manifold, variegated phenomenal transformations and modifications remain only as so many finite moments floating in the infinite life-current of the eternal Purusha which stands above all these, summing up all these into its infinity. Wherein these finite moments cease to be as finites and role on only as so many eddies and whirlpools in the universal current, which alone exists as Itself, leaving no room for the individual moments, whirlpool or eddies to exist as themselves but only as constituting the elements of the one universal life-current of the Eternal Self. This view of the Purusha as absorbing in its own nature the entire phenomenal universe and making the phenomenal universe exist only as a part of the life-current of the Purusha was evolved by the thinkers of the yoga school of thought.

Samkhya did not affirm anything as regards this Purusha and its relation to the universe. It only affirmed its existence as an independent and absolute principle and traced the entire universe to the Prakriti or the thought activity, which was taken to be a principle supported by the Purusha but standing apart. The thought of Kapila, the founder of Samkhya, started from the phenomenal universe, reached the ultimate basis of it, thought of consciousness in activity, the Prakriti, looked behind, caught a glimpse

of the Eternal Self standing behind all activity untouched, unmodified. There it stopped. It did not proceed further to take its stand upon the position occupied by the Eternal Self or Purusha and look down upon the Prakriti there and its varied manifestation. That was reserved for his disciple Patanjali to accomplish. He enunciates in his system of yoga that this Purusha is the omniscient, the omnipotent Lord of this universe as the universe is nothing but the life of that Lord in motion or manifestation. To see the universe as a manifestation of the life of the Lord, or to put it more correctly, to see the universe as the Lord Himself in material manifestation, is the correct view according to this system of philosophy.

Yoga warns us against looking upon the universe as made up of so many fragments of matter. It regards it rather as one unified and organized whole, each part, however seemingly insignificant, vitally connected with the rest and constituting all taken together one life, having its root in the *moola prakriti*, or active intelligence or thought activity of the Purusha. Samkhya thought that the thought activity or prakriti, though drawing its sustenance and strength from the Purusha, was not of the Purusha. Yoga introduces the new idea here that this prakriti is not something in itself and by itself but it is only in, by and of the Purusha. It would be rather better to say that even this yoga system of thought did not evolve this idea in fullness. But the great founder of the yoga system of thought by his speculations gave a strong push to the thought system of India in that direction. It was by the vedantic school of thought, which forms the strongest current in the philosophy of the *Gita*, that the idea was fully worked out. The principle of prakriti with its manifestation, the universe, was brought under complete subjection to the divine principle of the Absolute Self, the eternal Purusha, which somewhere has been designated by the Lord of the *Gita* as Purushottama.

We find it enunciated here that the Lord of the universe, being the Eternal Seer, cannot be seen as such, cannot be

grasped objectively, for if it were so, his seer-ness would be gone. He can only be seen as manifest in the universe which is the objective current that his seeing-ness assumes in its evolutionary course. To see him is to see him as he could be seen. His subjectivity as such cannot be seen, but he is not only subjective, the objective is a necessary counterpart of him. And as the subjective of him as such necessarily remains ever the same, the objective as such necessarily remains ever the not-same or never the same or is ever changing and going into appearance and disappearance.

The objective has to be seen and so has necessarily to be in time and so necessarily has to be and cease to be. Thus the objective, true to its nature, ever goes on changing. The subjective, true to its nature, ever remains the same, only mirror-like reflects the ever-changing objectivity without being affected or modified. The Lord or *Ishwara* of Patanjali sums up both in himself: transcending both in his own 'in-itself-ness', infiniteness and absoluteness, letting them remain in Himself as the moments of His life, losing their finiteness, which attach to them only as they seem to stand apart as independent existence. They did not really belong to them as they exist only as moments of the life that is not finite but infinite; and so as being, in this life and of this life, they cease to be of themselves infinite. Thus ceasing to be, they really have the being, the real being of the Infinite which embraces them all into its universal life and lives its own life wherein they exist only as moments. This life, then, is the life of the Purusha which or who only lives and all that appears to live only lives in, by, and of Him. Thus to see the life of the universe as it appears to us is really to see the Lord in His life of the universe.

Here we may be confronted with the position that the universe, or the material elements that go to make it up, exist of themselves independently, and thus to suppose these to be only moments of the life of the Purusha or the Eternal Seer is unwarranted. Before we take up this question, we should try to understand what existence means. We ought to try to

understand what we mean by saying that a thing is or exists. It only means that the thing whose existence we predicate is either existing to itself or existing to others. That is to say, either it feels its existence itself and knows that it exists as all self-conscious entities do, or existence it felt or cognized by others as it affects the conscious existence of those others.

The material elements that constitute the universe, if they exist at all, must either exist to themselves or to others. If we suppose that they exist to themselves, that is to say, they feel and realize their own existence within themselves, they must be conscious of their existence or conscious of their self-existence, which means that they must be self-conscious. On this supposition they cannot be material in their nature, for materiality implies absence of self-consciousness, and instead of that they must be of the nature of thought, intelligence or consciousness and thus spiritual. At the same time we have to bear in mind that they cannot be many but one, for self-consciousness implies the return of the conscious energy to itself in order to grasp itself as the object of self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness thus necessarily implies the essential identity of the subject and object and at the same time the exclusion of anything else besides the essentially identical subject-object from the circle or range of consciousness. This would make the circle of consciousness perfect and complete within itself, without the inclusion of anything other or foreign within it, without coming into relation with anything else other than it, without being limited and conditioned and modified by anything else outside it – thus being in itself the infinite and the Absolute Being or be-ness. Such a being or be-ness excludes from its very nature the idea of plurality or many-ness which implies necessarily being in relation to others outside, being limited and conditioned by foreign elements or existence. Thus the supposition that the elements of the universe exist to themselves leads necessarily to the conclusion that they are not many, but the one infinite and absolute being.

Now let us take up the other possible supposition that they do not exist to themselves but exist to others, their existence being felt and realized not by themselves but by others outside them. In that case they have no existence – true and real existence – at all. independent of the others who realize their existence. Thus we come back to the position that the so-called material elements of the universe exist only as material elements insofar as their existence is realized by someone behind them. Thus their existence can only be not as that of independent entities, but only as moments, elements or ideas entering into the current of the consciousness that is ceaselessly flowing in someone who realizes their existence behind them. No other alternative is possible.

Thus, the position that the universe as it appears to us has no independent reality, but is part and parcel of the current of consciousness of the Infinite Being, is the only possible rational position that can be taken. We need not take up the third supposition, that there may be existence absolutely unrealized, unfelt, unknown and unrecognized, as it carries its own refutation with itself. Such an existence can in no way be distinguished from non-existence and no one can, with any show of reason, maintain that it means existence in the actual sense of the term. So, either the universe exists in its ultimate essence as the Self-Conscious Infinite Being, or it exists in its apparent aspect as the elements or the moments of the conscious life of that infinite and Absolute Being or Purusha.

It would be advisable here to make it clear what is necessarily implied in the conception of the Infinite and Absolute Being. The ‘infinite’ does not mean the infinite in extension, number, measure or quantity, for these cannot possibly give us any conception of the infinite. Extension cannot possibly be infinite, for from its very nature it implies finiteness. Its being itself is in something else outside it. It extends only in something other than it, and it begins from and ends at something other than it. It can never be out of relation to others and hence it necessarily must ever remain in relation, finite, limited and conditioned. Similarly,

quantity implies measurement, limitation and finiteness. So to think that the Infinite can ever be realized in extension, measure or quantity is an absurdity. At the same time, we are convinced that there can be no true existence in the finite, limited, related and conditioned being, for true existence means existence 'I' in itself, or itself, absolute existence.

Existence in relation depends for its maintenance upon the existence of the other it is related to, and so is not the existence which belongs to itself. For instance, the existence of the son in relation to the father can only last as long as there is the father to relate itself to the son. Without the father, the son may exist, though not as the son in his sonship but as something else. The sonship in the son does not belong to the real existence of the son, but is there on account of its relation to the father. This sort of existence, relative existence, or existence on account of some other outside oneself, is unreal existence from the standpoint of existence in itself of oneself. So all finite existence or existence that refers to something else outside it to account for itself and to give it existence, is unreal. So finite existence means existence due to, derived from, in relation to, limited by, conditioned by something outside. This necessarily attaches to all existence which does not realize itself but is realized by others outside it, to all existence in extension, quantity or space, time and relation.

The only real existence or absolute and infinite existence can be the existence that realizes itself in its own self-consciousness, and that therefore has existence in itself out of all relation to anything outside itself. Thus it is unlimited and unconditioned by anything other than itself, the self-realized, the self-completed, absolute and infinite existence.

To attain this Infinite Being, the absolute be-ness, is the aim of yoga philosophy. Lord Sri Krishna teaches us that all our activities must be so regulated as to lead us on towards the attainment of this goal. Active we must be. Activity is engrained in our nature. The entire course of evolution commenced in the activity of the moola prakriti, the energy of

the Purusha. As long as we are in this current of evolution we cannot become absolutely inactive. Thus, it being necessarily the inherent nature of ours to be active, and it having become established that activity would produce changes or modifications in our inward nature, in accordance with its own tendency based upon the objective we have in view, it becomes necessary for us to ascertain as to what method to adopt to turn the activity in our nature to our best account. Namely, to make it subservient to the realization of our ultimate purpose, the attainment of the ultimate goal.

Many whose minds are occupied with worldly enjoyments place before themselves varieties of objects to be attained by their activities. Sometimes they desire wealth, sometimes reputation, influence, power and fame, etc. in this world. Sometimes they desire to acquire such religious merit as would enable them to enjoy or to continue the enjoyment of sexual pleasures even after death in the next world. All these people are *kamatmanah*, who have identified themselves with the desires or sensual desires for the pleasures of this world.

These people are not capable of placing before themselves the highest, the purest and the noblest ideal of becoming one with the Infinite and Absolute Being, whose nature is ever full of bliss and peace. They are devoid of *vyavasayatmika buddhi*, or pure reason, which has within itself the certainty of the ideal of attainment of the Infinite. They on the other hand follow false religions, engage in futile discussions of the vedic texts, deliver flowery and ornamental speeches trying to convince people that there is nothing else in existence than what can be grasped by the senses. Their doctrine is that we should aim only at the acquisition of pleasures and enjoyments of this world and also similar pleasures in swarga. These people can never rise to the higher teaching which stops the working of the laws of karma in forging fetters for our bondage. They rest content with being active only for the sake of enjoyments here and hereafter. "Know for certain, O Arjuna, that such

people whose minds and hearts are engaged in the pursuit of pleasures, wealth and power can never be fit to have the wisdom that leads to the attainment of real peace and bliss, proceeding, or being based upon, that state of mind which is self-concentrated, self-contained in ultimate recognition of the one-ness of the self with the Supreme Being.”

The Vedas are meant to meet the spiritual requirements of people having attained different stages of spiritual advancement. Hence they necessarily address themselves to people of all sorts of temperament: *sattwic* or intellectual and spiritual with subjective inclinations; *rajasic* or people having tendencies towards performance of great and glorious deeds; and *tamasic* or people with a very low degree of intelligence. That is why they, the Vedas, speak of different methods for different people. The Lord’s teaching to Arjuna is that he must place his ideal the highest of all. His ideal should be to transcend the three gunas – the sattwa, rajas and tamas – to pass beyond the differentiation of all sorts, to pass beyond the region of the relative and finite, to be above the sphere of duality and the pair of opposites, to be ever maintained in his own eternal self-existence, *nitya satvastha*, where it is unnecessary to acquire anything or to preserve anything, to be ever posted in his own (absolute and infinite) self.

This is the highest ideal which Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to look up to and strive after. All the other religious rights and ceremonies, and the positions that can be attained thereby, can bear the same comparison with this ideal, insofar as their fitness to allay the insatiable hankering and thirst of man after happiness and the attainment of pure bliss is concerned. An ordinary reservoir of water, be it a well, a pond or a tank, can bear to the fullness of the all-encompassing ocean of sweet water insofar as the physical thirst of men is concerned (2:46).

To have this ideal alone, and to make all else subordinate and subservient thereto, is extremely necessary for the attainment of success in our undertaking. The entire energy of our nature must be laid at the altar of this ideal if

we desire to overcome the almost insurmountable obstacles that confront us ahead in our course. The duties prescribed for us as conducting towards the attainment of this ideal, must be unswervingly performed for their own sake and not for any other purpose. They may in their usual course bring forward innumerable fruits or consequences, but we ought not to have any regard for these consequences. As soon as we turn our attention to the numerous consequences, good, bad or indifferent, that follow our performance of our duties, we begin to narrow ourselves down and strengthen the mould of the finite, which we have ignorantly assumed in our past. We must rather be always looking up to the unification of our self with the Absolute within us and regard the performance of duties as necessary steps leading towards that unification. Our duties having been found to be the only course of action, dictated by the inherent impulse in our Inmost Self is ever pointing towards that unification and identification with the Infinite, the dictates at the same time being based or being made to suit our present possibilities, powers and capacities.

This performance of the duties being based upon the pulsations of the inherent divine activity within us, which takes us out of our limited self and unifies us with the universal life all around in the bonds of universal love, compassion and sympathy, does not require from its very nature any other satisfaction, reward or recompense than that it has satisfied itself, obeyed itself, fructified itself and realized itself in doing its best to satisfy its inherent nature of universal love and compassion. If you ignorantly go beyond this and begin to look forward to or expect any reward or recompense, either in the shape of grateful recognition here or happiness hereafter, you ignorantly and foolishly lend strength to the binding and limiting power of karma or action and forge fetters for your own bondage.

Is it not a matter of disgrace and terrible shame for you to be acting for some recompense or reward as a slave obeys his master for some benefit to his own self. Having placed

the highest ideal before you of being one with the Infinite Lord of all, who is ever free and whose activities are all free for the sake of the ignorant world, is it not becoming on your part to be ever free in your actions: free from interested motives, free from the desire of recognition, reward or recompense, here or hereafter, only actuated by the inherent impulse of your nature of divine compassion and love, which has its realizations within itself and never seeks for any fruition outside itself.

Guard yourself at the same time against falling into the clutches of inactivity. Inactivity may as much proceed from self-regarding, self-limiting and self-narrowing sordid motives as activity. Let it not be strongly working within you that when activity is to be without any reward or recompense it is useless and it is better to be inactive. You will be then turning a deaf ear to the voice of divine compassion within you, to the voice of the Infinite Self which is ever realizing its oneness with all around it and thus urging you on to feel equally for all that surrounds you.

Guarding against dangers on both sides, viz. the dangers of selfish activity as well as selfish inactivity, both of which would keep you at a distance from the high goal of unification with the Infinite Self, be firmly fixed in the native impulse of that Infinite within you as manifested in universal love and compassion. Be active only in one-ness with that impulse of universal love, the divine impulse. This alone can save you from the bondage of karma and lead you to the realization of your goal, your identification with the ever-free, ever-blissful Eternal Self (2:53). This karma yoga leads to the attainment of samadhi wherein *buddhi* or pure reason, becomes immutably fixed in realization of the Infinite Self which is the highest attainment of yoga.

One who attains this perfection is said to be *sthithaprajna*. Here Arjuna puts this question to Sri Krishna, "What sort of being is the sthithaprajna, the man with his reason fixed in the realization of the infinite? How does he talk? How does he walk? How does he live this life? In short, what are

the characteristics by which this wonderful being is to be distinguished from others?" To this the Lord replies, "When all the desires that arise out of the conception, consciously or unconsciously held by man, that he is a finite, limited, conditioned and individualized being that fill up his inward nature *antahkarana*, or mind, are given up in the realization that his real being is infinite, perfect, out of all relations and wants, thus leaving no room for desires or passions being ever self-contented and self-satisfied, he is said to be sthithaprajna. Those who have not attained this perfection, their reason is ever moving and changing itself in accordance with the motion of the mind and senses. It is due to this motion, agitation or excitement that the reason which is self-illuminating or which as the self-illuminating activity of the Infinite should have revealed the Infinite Self, goes astray. Then instead of revealing the truth in its fullness, absoluteness, reveals it only partially, in a curiously confused shape, making it impossible for us to recognize it as it is.

The pure reason or *prajna* alone is capable of revealing the true nature or the Inmost Self, because it is nothing else but the Infinite Self stretching forth its inner consciousness to grasp itself and to realize itself in its inherent, self-consciousness. This reason then has to be brought back to its pure and immovable or fixed state, free from the effect produced on it by the agitation and the excitement of the mind and the senses. Certain sects of thinkers do not think it possible that the infinite can be realized or grasped by any means possessed by man. They forget that the infinite can never exclude man from his real being, and therefore man cannot but be that infinite itself in his inmost nature. At the same time, the infinite cannot be such unless it realizes itself, for if it be supposed that it is not possible for that infinite even to realize itself, it must cease to be infinite. For then, it would need someone else outside itself to realize its existence and in that case it must necessarily be in relation to something outside itself and thus necessarily be in relation, finite and limited.

Thus the position which is necessary if we admit the existence of the Infinite, that it realizes itself as well, leads necessarily to the conclusion that man also must be capable of realizing him, inasmuch as he is really that Infinite. Of course the realization can be attained only through that instrumentality which is used by the Infinite Himself or Itself for Its self-realization. This instrumentality is nothing but the Infinite Itself in its activity or manifesting as self-consciousness based upon differentiating its existence into subjective and objective in 'I know Myself'. And in again annihilating that differentiation in identifying the objective with the subjective in 'Myself am I'. This infinite in manifestation as differentiated and undifferentiated, the entire course taken together, is prajna or pure reason. Its course in differentiation is reason or prajna in motion. Its realization or the identity or the undifferentiated condition is prajna or reason at rest. Thus man can attain realization of the Infinite just as the Infinite realizes Itself, because the existence of the Infinite necessarily implies that man or the entire universe is nothing but the Infinite in its inmost essence.

In order to reach this state, man has gradually to still or calm down the excitement of his nature, the emotions and passions, to gradually weed out the desires that disturb the mind and lead astray the reason from its right path. He succeeds in putting reason on the track of the undifferentiated, and thus enables the reason to grasp in its embrace the consciousness of the Infinite Self. When this realization is attained, man becomes incapable of being confused or disturbed by pains, calamities and misfortunes. He becomes equally incapable of desiring for being excited or elated by pleasures and prosperities of the world. He becomes entirely free from attachment to anything of the world and hence is absolutely fearless, for there can be no fear unless and until there be attachment. At the same time free from anger, as there can be no anger when there is no attachment to anything, for anger arises only when the objects of our attachment or desire is being taken away from us.

Being entirely free from attachment, free from desires, free from passions, the mind or the will returns back to its original source, the pure reason or *prajna*, which having nothing to disturb itself comes back to its state of eternal rest.

The man who attains this state is said to be a *muni*, having his reason immutably fixed and concentrated in itself, which is the self of the infinite. Such a man is never moved or affected by good or evil. He is neither pleased with the good nor is displeased with the evil. He feels his self unalloyed, unmixed, unaffected, internally pure and blissful. Nothing that happens, or seems to happen, in his surroundings ever contaminate him. The reason or *prajna* of such a one is said to be immutably fixed. He it is who withdraws his senses within himself away from their contact with sensual objects, as a tortoise draws in its limbs within itself and feels thus in his condition of self-concentratedness, he is really the Infinite Being or be-ness.

This being has his reason immutably fixed within himself. The senses and the objects, though very strongly connected together, can be separated if the senses be denied their gratification, for the senses get strengthened by the continual gratification of their desires. Just as the body grows and develops by feeding upon various elements or articles of diet, so the senses develop and strengthen by feeding upon the gratification of sensual desires. If these gratifications be denied then they would naturally become weakened and in the course of time, the desires themselves will gradually die out. But the *rasa* or inward hankering after the pleasure, that is derived from sensual gratification, would not disappear unless and until the Highest Being, the ultimate existence, the Infinite Self is seen and realized.

The reason is this. The real cause of hankering after pleasures is the idea that underlies our present, limited existence that we are at the bottom finite beings. This necessarily awakens a desire in us to go outside of ourselves to suppress the misery of the finiteness in some consciousness, which might either unify us with the infinite or merge us into

forgetfulness of the finite and thus make us negatively enjoy the infinite. The so-called pleasures of the senses appear to be pleasure, because they excite the sense to such an extent that the attention of the finite is diverted through them for the time being from the perception of subjective finiteness, which is made up of numerous subconscious, conscious or semi-conscious desires, wants, limitations and privations to the perception of the outside. This thus takes it out of itself, out of its painful and miserable condition into something where that miserable finiteness is for the time being pushed down into the unconscious region.

This gradual dragging of the miserable finite into oblivion of itself through perception of the objective universe, lies at the basis of the sensation of pleasure that we feel when enjoying various sensual objects. They give us pain when, instead of enabling us to forget the finite existence of ours, they force this consciousness of our finiteness with still greater strength on our attention. This happens when on account of some violent shocks, either mental or physical or for some other reason when some pain is caused to us, we begin to think more of ourselves and thus to feel more our own subjective existence as limited, helpless and finite. In one word, any sensation that is calculated to push back our finite subjectively into unconsciousness would be pleasurable, whereas any sensation that is calculated to bring it out into prominence would be painful.

The perception of ourselves as finite must last as long as the infinite Lord of all is not seen and realized and, therefore, until that time the inward hankering after pleasure which is denoted by the word 'rasa' cannot disappear. As the realization of the Infinite Self cannot be attained as long as the desires of the senses are strongly agitating our whole being, we have to keep ourselves away from the gratification of the senses for some time – though it might be a little painful to us not having as yet realized the Infinite Self in spite of the inward hankering after the pleasures. Unless we undertake this difficult task and willingly undergo this

suffering we can never hope to reach the realization of the Absolute Being, which alone is calculated to destroy this inward hankering after pleasure and to give us a deep plunge into that bliss eternal which results from the realization of the Infinite Itself. This is only positive bliss after the realization of which the pleasures of the senses appear to have been empty shadows. Then these pleasures cannot be called pleasures at all but only pains, from the standpoint of the bliss that really belongs to the Infinite Being.

The pleasures were pleasures only insofar as they enabled the finite to forget itself and to pose itself as the infinite for the time being. The infinite not in reality but in mere assumption looked an appearance. As in the infinite, there was an assumption and appearance, so the bliss of infinite merely in assumption and appearance went under the name of pleasures. When the Infinite Itself is realized, the bliss which is its inherent life is realized in its reality. After this true realization of bliss eternal it becomes impossible for the sensual gratifications or the hankering after pleasures to have any existence at all even apparent. This suffering, that we have spoken about, the denying of sensual gratification in order to attain the realization of the infinite, is said to be *tapas*. Practising *tapas* is the surest method of inward purification, hence it is recommended here by the Lord Himself.

He warns Arjuna against being off his guard, for though a man might be exercising the utmost action he is capable of in practising *tapas* or denial of sensual gratifications, still the senses are so strong that they do carry away the mind forcibly towards the objects. It is very difficult to hold them under check, and hence we must bear them down with all the strength that our nature is possessed of. The senses must be brought under complete restraint. You must practise to remain concentrated on your Inmost Self with all your senses self-restrained, for as soon as you attain the complete subjugation of the senses, your reason would attain to its ultimate condition of rest.

Beware. In order to keep off the attachment towards the objects, you have to keep away from your mind the very contemplation of these objects, for as soon as you think about the objects you will get attached to them. Remember, having not yet realized the infinite, the inward hankering after the objects or *rasa* is yet existing in your nature. Therefore, as an aspirant after the truth and as a beginner you should not venture even to think about the objective of pleasures.

I must tell you the truth. It would be impossible for you to keep yourself uncontaminated and to preserve yourself from ultimate downfall if you do not take care to keep away the very thoughts of pleasurable objects. Here I may tell you how the very thought of pleasures might lead you to ultimate ruin, for the thought of pleasures connected with the inward hankering of pleasures that still exists creates attachment. This attachment grows into desire for the pleasure. The desires from their very nature are not capable of being thoroughly fulfilled and the non-fulfilment of desires gives rise to anger. Anger creates confusion and agitation of the mind, developing into various kinds of delusions that lead to forgetfulness of what is right and what is wrong. This forgetfulness creates confusion of reason and ultimately suppression thereof. You can very well understand what your condition would be when the reason in you is destroyed and ceases to work. Would it not mean complete destruction of yourself? This destruction of yourself, you must see, proceeds from the contemplation of sensual pleasures.

The series of causes and effects that work in the mind are psychologically connected. Once you allow the first link in the chain to enter into your mind, you cannot check the laws of thought from working themselves out and ultimately bringing about your complete downfall. Therefore, it behoves you to think well upon this chain of causes and effects and, for your own safety and wellbeing, to keep away the thoughts of pleasures and sensual gratifications from entering your mind. This would be necessary for you to

adopt as long as you have not subdued your senses. After you have attained mastery over yourself, when you have cultured and disciplined yourself by following the method of *tapas*, it would not be necessary for you to keep away the very thoughts of sensual pleasures. Your senses would then become devoid of attraction to and repulsion from sensual objects. They would be completely under the control of yourself, *atmabashya*, and their moving amongst the objects under these circumstances will not create any disturbance.

The man who has thus subdued the senses attains to the peaceful state of existence. His inward nature becomes full of calmness and peace. The mind, being free from all distractions of the senses, passions and emotions, attains the state of equilibrium. In such a state the mind becomes free from all pains as pains can only affect the mind by making it distracted and confused. When it has attained to a state where distraction is impossible to it, the pains and misfortunes of the world must cease to exist. Attaining this peaceful state of the mind, the reason of the man attains the state of complete rest. This state of reason cannot be attained by one who has not mastered the senses in the way prescribed and is *ayukta*. No one who does not meditate upon the reasons explained herein – the chain of cause and effect that leads from the mere imagination and thought of worldly pleasures to the complete destruction of man as a rational being – can attain to inward peace of mind.

He must be foolish who imagines that there can be any happiness without the attainment of this inward peace. Whenever the mind is allowed to run after the senses, the reason is lost and with that the ultimate destruction remains the only course left. Hence, on no account should you allow the senses to get the upper hand. Keep them well restrained under the control of reason. Thus alone would your reason be fixed and at rest.

Verily I tell you, O Arjuna, that the man of the world and the self-restrained man differ as poles asunder. What is night to the man of the world is day to the man of self-restraint,

inasmuch as the man of self-restraint experiences and perceives a world of things quite beyond the perception and experience of the man of the world. The man of the world remains in perception and experience of the sensual world and its pleasures, which is not in existence and quite unreal from the standpoint of the man who attains to a perception of the reality underlying this world of shadows. Whereas the man of self-restraint remains ever unmoved, ever unaffected, exactly as the ocean receives into itself all the rivers of the world yet is never changed or affected but remains ever the same. So the man who lets the pleasures of the world or the desires to enter into his being without disturbing him or affecting him in the least, he only attains real peace. Thus the man who has given up all desires, all aspirations, who has no sense of what is his, or what belongs to him, who never thinks within himself that he is an individual 'I', who has universalized himself and whose 'I' has grown into the 'I' of the universe, the 'I' of the Infinite and the Absolute, the 'I' eternal attains eternal peace. This is what goes under the name of being in Brahma.

Once attaining this, it is never given up and forgotten. No one who attains this can ever again be confused. Attaining this, one remains in it even at the time of death and surely attains *nirvana* or the annihilation of all limitations, and identity with *Brahma*, the Eternal Infinite Being or be-ness that only is.

DISCOURSE 2

Chapter 2: Samkhya Yoga Chapter 3: Karma Yoga

At the end of Chapter 2, Lord Sri Krishna has spoken about the greatness of knowledge, the greatness of self-restraint which ends in giving fixity to the pure reason, which perceives and ultimately rests in the perception of the Infinite Self. Thus the pure reason, as resting in the Infinite Self as its object of realization, has been extolled and pointed out as the highest ideal to be striven after. There seems to be no connection between a life which seeks to restrain itself from objective tendencies, to strengthen and develop the pure reason, and a life that has engaged in carrying on a war like the one in which Arjuna found himself engaged in, and to carry on which Sri Krishna was urging upon him as his highest duty.

This naturally creates a great difficulty and confusion in the mind of Arjuna, and he puts this question to the great teacher: “If, according to the principles inculcated by you, the pure reason occupies the highest place, why do you insist on me to carry on this terrible war? Why should I not give it up and retire from all active life in this world in order to develop the faculty of pure reason by means of a life of asceticism, self-denial, self-restraint, study and meditation? Of what use would all this bloodshed and dreadful dealing of death to so many of my fellow beings be towards realization

of the highest ideal that you point out, the realization of the Infinite Self? I utterly fail to perceive any connection between what you call upon me to perform as my duty at present and the highest goal that you point out I should strive after with all efforts to attain. My mind is confused. Point out to me some definite line of action which might lead me to eternal salvation and bliss.”

To this the Lord replies, “At the very outset, two paths have been pointed out by Me, for the attainment of the highest goal. The paths differ according to the temperament of the individual that sets before himself the task of attaining the goal. The temperaments are either sattwic, rajasic or tamasic. The *sattwa* principle represents the ‘I’ factor of the self-consciousness, or the ‘I am Myself’ of the Absolute. Hence it is always more subjective, more intellectual, more discriminating and illuminating. The individual in whom this principle predominates would naturally be more thoughtful and less active. The principle of rajas represents the ‘Am’ factor, and so it is more self-assertive, imaginative, ambitious and active. It is ever emphasizing the principle of ‘Am-ness’ or ‘be-comingness’ that lies at its root. Hence an individual possessed of this principle in pre-eminence would naturally act more and think less.

The principle of *tamas* represents the ‘Myself’ factor where the flow of self-consciousness towards objectivity, or the objectifying current of self-consciousness stops and pauses for a while, remaining as the object of itself, without any consciousness in relation to the subject behind it. Then the current of consciousness turns back to carry this object into identity with the subject. In this backward course the *tamas* evolves *rajas*, the stagnant elements give birth to active existences, and in the course of time, the *rajas* evolves *sattwa* out of it, the illuminating principle which grasps the essential identity of the subject and object. It is differentiation of the infinite consciousness when becoming self-consciousness, which it necessarily becomes, into subject and object, and the identity or the grasping of the essential

identity of the differentiated principles that constitute the essential elements of the self-consciousness or the infinite 'be-ness'. Thus the 'Myself' factor, the tamas principle representing the stagnant pole or the zero point of the current of self-consciousness, makes the individual in whom this principle predominates utterly unfit for any spiritual progress. Therefore his nature is not taken into account. We have only to deal with the sattwic and the rajasic natures and for them there are two different paths to be pursued.

The rajasic has to pursue the path of karma yoga, realization of the self through the path of activity, and the sattwic has to pursue the path of jnana yoga, realization of the truth through the path of knowledge and discrimination. The reason is that the man who has more of activity in him from his very nature cannot be made to devote himself absolutely to the path of knowledge. The inherent nature of his being would be ever impelling him towards active pursuits. If you chain him down to the pursuits of knowledge and prevent him absolutely from all active pursuits, the preponderance of rajas in him would compel him to be at least thinking about or imagining or indulging in imagination of the active life, the objective inclinations and the pleasures that attend the life of the world. Thus instead of progressing on the path of self-realization he would be wasting his time and at the same time, increasing his difficulties by laying up a store of bad karma or vicious mental cravings, which would necessarily descend down upon him in strong irresistible currents. When they gather up sufficient strength in themselves they would sweep him away downwards into unfathomable depths of immorality and corruption.

The thing that must always be borne in mind is to ever keep the inner nature, the mental faculties, the imagination, the intellect and the will free from the impure impulsions or samskaras that arise on account of indulging in imagination about the things, the pleasures and enjoyments of the world. To keep the mind free from these impurities for one in whose nature rajas predominates, the best course

is to be ever active in the service of humanity or in the service of all creatures, not for the sake of any recompense or reward but because the self in us naturally binds us with all the world of existence in bonds of love and sympathy. For philanthropic and patriotic activities, prompted by the principle of love that resides in our Inmost Self, keep all our faculties engaged, giving them no opportunities to let in the impure imagining about the worldly objects. In the course of time, the mind becomes absolutely freed or cured of all unclean leanings or inclinations towards the sensual pleasures and gets established in its pure nature of thought and intelligence capable of illuminating the true relations and interrelations that exist in the principles of the universe standing before it. This nature or the capacity of the mind was well nigh lost before on account of its being led astray by the activity of the senses which were agitated by the misery and fleeting pleasures of the world. That turned the balance of the mind by their own activity, keeping it engaged in perceiving these pleasures and becoming excited, muddled and limited instead of standing aside and grasping the actualities and the realities that underlie the changing, the ever-changing world of phenomena.

The rajasic man stands in danger of being led away towards activities that land him in the dark abyss of sensual pleasures if left alone. If you put him into the school of knowledge he will find himself outside his element. Though compelled to be inactive from outside he would be impurely and viciously active inside in his own mind and thus place himself in a worse position. The wisest course would be to let his active nature have full scope in activities that are prompted by love and sympathy and which is at the same time calculated to keep his mind free from activities. His active or rajasic nature will thus, in the course of time, have itself worked out, as the rajas in its backward course fulfils itself by evolving out of it sattwa.

When it is kept from degenerating into tamas the rajasic nature will gradually evolve the sattwic out of it. A man

of action would be transformed into the man of thought whose mind has become purified by the disinterested and altruistic activity that he has been pursuing so long. This purity attained by it is similar to that which is attained by the follower of the other path by means of various meditations. After the inward purity of mind is attained the pure reason has to pursue the discrimination and the grasping of the inner principles that underlie the manifestations of the universe – the bhootas, the tanmatras, the ahamkara, the mahat, the three-sided prakriti – and the resolution of all these principles step by step into the condition of the causes lying behind each, such as the bhootas into the tanmatras, and so on, until they stand resolved into the ultimate principle, the Purusha, or the Infinite Self. This course is the same for both, until that point is attained or the fitness to carry on the study of the eternal principles underlying the universe, the purification of the *antahkarana*, or the mind, has to be performed either by the path of knowledge, jnana yoga, if you are sattvic, or by the path of action or karma yoga, if you are rajasic.

In Chapter 3, sloka 4 it is said: The end to be attained is absolute *naishkarmya* or freedom from all activities that necessarily lead to the self being conditioned and limited. This cannot be attained merely by giving up all actions. The real root lying within us of desires and the ignorance that makes us appear as conditioned and limited selves necessarily prompts us towards activities that are regarded to free us from those limitations. The wants that arise out of them remaining as strong as before can never allow us to be absolutely inactive. In spite of all attempts to be inactive, it, the conception that we are limited individualized selves, would compel us to be active. If we forcibly stop our external activities, it would take hold of the inner faculties, the mind and the senses, and project them into activities natural to them: imaginations and imaginary indulgences and enjoyments. Thus the real root of activity which forges fetters for us and binds us down lies inside us.

The gunas, the sattwa, rajas and tamas of prakriti, cause us to appear as individualized beings. This individuality, the effect of the operation of the gunas, must as long as it works in its own way unrestrained, compel us to be active. It would be dangerous then, (sloka 6) to stop the senses of action, or *karmendriyas*, and to allow the mind to indulge in imaginations, which would be the natural result of allowing the individuality principle, or the ahamkara inside, to be active while external activities have been put a stop to. One who does so takes a wrong course and is sure to land himself in insurmountable difficulties as shown above. So, the best course for us would be to exercise a strong control over the senses by means of resolute will and to let the senses of action remain engaged in performance of those duties or activities that are prompted by universal love and compassion, regardless of all consequences here and hereafter.

Action implies some motive at the back of it propelling us towards the attainment of some object. If this object of attainment is something, which is calculated to benefit the individual self as distinguished or differentiated from all other beings of the universe or in conflict with the interests of the all, it cannot be attained except by emphasizing the idea of separateness of the individual that tries to attain it. Hence the attainment of this object by strongly emphasizing the individualizing tendency of the person who tries to attain it, strengthens the bondage he is already in, and pushes him down into the abyss of, *maya*, or ignorance and misery. On the other hand, if the object of attainment be one not in conflict with the interests of others besides ourselves but in harmony with them and calculated to do good to all, including it may very well be ourselves, it must necessarily weaken the conception of individuality as a separate and limited being and strengthen the idea of the self being one with the Self of the entire universe. It would thus lead us gradually towards dropping off the individuality and the substitution of universality in its place which would end in the attainment of the Infinite Self.

The highest good of all lies in the realization of the self that lies at the basis of the entire universe and that only truly exists. In the attainment thereof lies the freedom from all miseries, for misery in its ultimate analysis is nothing but living in the not-self, living in the unreal, living in that which is not but only seems to be. The seeming-to-be allures us into embracing it as the true and the real and leads us to build our hopes of self-fulfilment on its permanence and reality.

Truth being stronger than fiction, we are awakened ruthlessly from our dreams and we find our dearest seeming to be dropping off from us, our bodies, our friends, our relations, our nearest and dearest ones vanishing away leaving no trace behind. Misery would surely go away if we could distinguish the true from the false and hold fast to the true giving up the false. So the highest good can be nothing but the realization of the truth, the real, the permanent and the giving up of the false, however seemingly true and real it might be. Before the attainment of this truth, a particular course of discipline and culture has to be followed which would have the necessary consequence of making us fit for the attainment of this truth.

This course of discipline and culture is denoted by the word *yajna* being derived from the root *yaja* (sangat karn), to unite or to make fit for. Yajna is that which takes hold of the individual, as he is at present engulfed in ignorance and misery, lifts him up gradually from the depths of miseries, and leads him on towards the attainment of the highest truth and the realization of the Infinite Self that he really is. No activity can produce bondage that can be undertaken for the performance of this yajna, which is based upon the realization of the unity of all interests between the individual self and all other selves that go to make up the universe. Yajna always calls upon us to act for the sake of satisfying the impulses of love and sympathy, and at the same time enjoins on us to realize our oneness with the entire universe of existence in that Being or Infinite Self that lies behind

us all, and that manifests itself in the natural sympathy that exists in us for all beings high or low. To obey these yajnic impulses and to realize them by the performance of yajna, would, instead of strengthening the bondages, shatter them into pieces and clear the way of obstacles and difficulties leading us towards our self-realization.

The great Being who arises by the self-assertion of the Absolute in self-conscious realization of itself, the Being who has his 'be-ness' in relation to the three-sided *Prakriti*, or the primeval energy of the Absolute with the three moments in it of the 'I', the 'Am' and the 'Myself', the *sattwa*, the *rajas*, the *tamas*; the Being in short next to the Absolute, related to the world of phenomena as its subjective self, the seer and the knower of the universe as such; the Being through whom the objective universe derives itself and its unity, organization, systematization and individualization, is the Being known by the word yajna, or *Saguna Brahma*.

It is this Being in whom there is the source of all love, compassion and sympathy. It is through His impulses within us insofar as we are in Him or properly speaking, we are Him, that the divine feeling of love overflows within our hearts, and knits us in the bonds of friendliness, unity and compassion with the entire world of existence. So yajna for us means the realization of His existence in us by carrying out in practice the pulsations of His life within the inmost recesses of our being.

The great Being Yajna during the course of evolution became more and more limited and individualized, though the limitations were only in appearance and thus, in the course of time, it evolved out of itself the several organs, *indriyas* of action and knowledge. These *indriyas*, insofar as they are active in us individual selves, are individual *indriyas*. But these individual *indriyas* have universal *indriyas* behind them through whom they act and realize themselves. The organ of vision in us cannot fulfil itself in perception of the form of the universe, unless it acts in and through the medium of light, the universal *indriya*, for the

perception of form. The Universal Being, the Yajna, divides itself in two directions: on the one hand, the universal principles are evolved meaning by the word universal relatively universal from our standpoint, and on the other hand, under the operation of the principle of individuality or *ahamkara*, individual selves or individual principles, or beings regarding themselves falsely as individuals are brought into existence.

The universal or the relatively universal principles that have the principle of individuality working below them, or who work through the principle of individuality but are not worked upon by it and thus perform their functions, in connection with the individualized beings, of making them realize the universe as it is related to the universal in and through their universalized existence, are the devas, who have to be served by the performance of the yajnas.

The devas have the function of connecting the world of individualized beings with the world of universals. The individualized beings, on the other hand, have to maintain the connection with the deva world by means of keeping themselves in touch, in their thoughts and actions, with the universal principles. The life of the individual cannot maintain itself entirely divorced from the universal principles that give it its vitality, substance and vigour. In short, the individual cannot be what it is but in and through the universal. Just as the individual has its life subdivided into several departments, so the universal Being has also its life subdivided into several comparatively universal departments: each of the individuals having its corresponding universal department and it is in this correspondence that the life of the individual and that of the universal find each their fulfilment and realization in the evolution and maintenance of the universe as it is. The universe is neither made up of individuals merely without any connection and relation to the universals behind them nor of the universals alone without the individuals to give them concrete individuality and particularized existence. The yajna, or the Great Being,

standing behind this universe as its universal life, as its subjective self or soul, thus realizes himself in manifestation as the universal, flowing into individuals and the individual realizes itself in the universal. In this way it is that the universe is kept up and maintained.

The yajna of the universal is to realize itself through the individual and the yajna of the individual is to realize itself through the universal: without the mutual co-relation and co-realization, the yajna of the universe cannot go on. Hence, the mutuality of correlation is spoken of as the great wheel-chakra, the individual universal wheel which has been set agoing by the Great Being. The yajna should be kept going by the performance of the yajna or by our living the life by which the universal may be realized. Then by helping the universal to function itself in and through us or by offering up all our capacities, powers, faculties, all that we are possessed of in short, at the altar of the universal to be used up by it for its own sake: for the realization of universal good, universal love through the maintenance and propagation of righteousness – the only means for the realization of the universal. These yajnic actions have been divided and subdivided in the holy scriptures into several classes and we have innumerable yajnas prescribed for us. The main principle running through them all is the realization of the universal either in thought, by study and meditation, or in actions of love and compassion.

So Sri Krishna teaches that we as individuals deriving all our energy, vigour and strength from the universal or the universals within us ought to give ourselves up to the universals and use the strength, the energy given us for their sake only or for the sake of righteousness which is the very breath of their life. If we deny them this and live a life of personal enjoyments, using the strength and energy given us for sensualities and not for yajnas, we have to be condemned as thieves for misappropriating the energy that really does not belong to us, for purposes for which it is not given us. But if you live the life of yajna all your impurities that bind

you down to the individual wants and limitations will be washed off, you will gradually come to live the life and realize the 'be-ness' of the universal and Infinite Self.

In this way it is that the life of yajna, maintaining the root principle of universal life, the realization of the individual in and through the universal intact, keeps up and preserves the entire universe in harmony and order. The forces of nature which are only the expressions of the activity of the root principle work in harmony and order, keeping us free from those freaks, irregularities and aberrations which we have become so familiar with as drought, pestilence, famine, etc. The Lord therefore says that the performance of yajna, by introducing the principle of harmony into the universe, brings down rain which maintains life upon earth, and this yajna is found as the result of the activity of Brahma or the Great Being who is the Self of the universe. This Being had arisen from the Absolute, the *akshara*, as a consequence of the self-conscious realization of the Absolute of itself. Thus the Absolute is connected with the performance of yajna and it is in and through the life of yajnas that the Absolute can be reached, the all-pervading Infinite Self can be realized. This is the highest aim to be attained by man. Utterly worthless is the life of him who lives for the sake of transitory and fleeting enjoyments which are only miseries in disguise; who does not live the life of this yajna; who does not follow up this great wheel of universal life; and who misses the opportunity of freeing himself from all pains and sorrows and lifting himself up through this great wheel to the sublime heights and eternal bliss of the Absolute Self. (3:16)

(3:17) He, whose enjoyment lies only in the self, who is ever satisfied with the realization of the self, as a matter of fact there is nothing which can be said to be his duty. He has to attain nothing by action nor to lose anything by inaction. There is nothing in the whole world of existence which can be the object of his desire. He is ever self-satisfied, absorbed in the realization of the eternal bliss that is inherent in his nature. This is the highest ideal that has to

be attained. By leading the life of yajna, therefore, it is your duty to discharge the functions of your position, to perform the actions that ought to be performed ever remaining unattached to the consequences of your actions. This is the way for man to attain the Absolute. It was thus that the great Janaka and others of old attained perfection.

There is also another consideration why you, Arjuna, should choose the line of activity or karma yoga. For the good of the world requires that you should offer yourself up to support the cause of righteousness represented by Yudhishtira by all means in your power. The whole world looks up to you as its leader and ideal. Whatever course of action you adopt will be followed by all. It is a rule that the masses never think for themselves. They only think the thoughts and perform the actions that their leaders think and do. Hence a very heavy responsibility rests upon the head of those who are looked upon as leaders of society. If you turn your back upon this war, the whole army arrayed behind you will follow you in your unrighteous course of action and the cause of Yudhishtira (*dharma*) would be utterly ruined. On your head will rest the responsibility of suffering the unjust usurper, the tyrannizing oppressor Duryodhana to rule the sacred land of Bharatvarsha, which ought to be ruled by the very righteousness incarnate, your eldest brother Yudhishtira.

Look at me, there is nothing in all these three worlds that I have to attain. Still I have chosen for myself the line of action and I am standing here in the midst of battle because I realize that though it is not necessary for me to act for my own sake, still if I do not take up the cause of righteousness and do not join the struggle to defend righteousness against the onslaughts of unrighteousness, the whole world will come to ruin. My example would be followed by all. The world would henceforward, if I were to sleep over this affair, take it as a rule of conduct that it is not the duty of man to resist by all means in his power the growth and progress of the influence of unrighteous people.

It is the first principle of morality or *dharma* that we should not be indolent but ever active, and our activity must express itself whenever necessary in opposing and resisting with all our strength the onrush of unrighteousness in this world. We should always be realizing that if we have been placed in positions of responsibility it becomes our duty still more strongly and emphatically to resist and oppose the course of unrighteousness. For if we responsible leaders do not take the initiative in the matter, the masses behind us would naturally stand aside and, in the course of time, unrighteousness, oppression and tyranny would reign rampant in this world. The consequence would be the disturbance of harmony and order that obtains in the world and the substitution in its place of confusion worse confounded, resulting in the destruction of all humanity. You have been grieving for a handful of men, your near and dear relations gathered together in this field of Kurukshetra. But you have no idea of the fact that suffering unrighteousness to grow strong, however small it may seem in its dimensions in the beginning, when it is your duty to trample upon it and to crush it, is to lay the axe at the root of the entire humanity. The life of humanity is maintained, developed and strengthened by righteousness alone, and the enemy of righteousness is the enemy of the entire humanity. To cherish him, to protect him, or to suffer him to live is to destroy the entire world of humanity (3:24).

(3:25) For these reasons it is the duty of even the man of knowledge to perform disinterested action that ought to be performed in the same way as the ignorant interestedly perform actions, for their own sake, with a view to protect the world from being destroyed by unrighteousness only with this difference – that the man of knowledge would never be attached to the consequences or the fruits of his actions. The wise man ought not to create confusion in the understanding of the unwise who are attached to the actions and desire to enjoy their fruits, but he ought to guide them to their proper destiny by setting before them high and noble examples

of conduct by undertaking to perform actions dictated by the divine impulses of love and compassion. If he opposes unrighteousness and its followers it must not be because he hates them but because he loves them and it is for their sake, with a view to put a stop to their unrighteous course and also for the sake of humanity at large that he girds up his loins.

Never get yourself deluded by the idea that it is you who are acting and your real self has no concern at all with any action or inaction. It is the eternal Seer, the Onlooker, the *sakshin*, which ever remains the same. It is only on account of its manifesting itself in self-consciousness that its inherent energy breaks forth into the three elements of consciousness which evolve the idea of individuality out of them. It is after the evolution of this idea of individuality which has been born out of the self-conscious activity of the prakriti, energizing itself in differentiation that the reflection of this principle on the entire scene of manifestation of the three gunas produces the illusory idea that the real self, the Infinite Self, is the actor, the doer of whatever appears on the scene (3:27).

(3:28–30) The wise man realizes the position that his real self is completely free in its absoluteness and it is the gunas only that are producing the phenomena of the universe by their own action and reaction. So I call upon you, Arjuna, to resign all your activities into Me by fixing your mind into the Inmost Self and of (the Me) standing behind all phenomena. Thus having given up all expectations, cares and anxieties (*nirashari*) and all ideas of mineness in connection with success, failure or other consequences, engage in this battle of righteousness free from all inward mental disturbances, turmoils or cares (*vigatajvarah*).

(3:31–32) This is the essence of My teaching. Those who act up to it with faith and love become free from all the bondages of karma. Those who do not act up to it and speak against, look upon them as deprived of all knowledge, beings without brains. The reason why they do not appreciate it, is that they have not risen by means of culture and discipline to that level of knowledge which is necessary in order to dive

deep into the nature of things and understand the philosophy that is being expounded by Me. Therefore, as long as they do not attain the necessary level of culture their nature will compel them to take a lower course. Do not uselessly fight with them; compulsion or compulsory control is useless and acts as a hindrance in the further advancement of people. So let those who cannot understand this philosophy follow their own lower course and gradually attain to the level when this teaching can be imparted to them.

(3:33) The senses are strongly attracted and repelled by their various objects. Beware! These attractions and repulsions are the real enemies of this self; and you should exert all your inner spiritual strength to subdue them; and to resist their attempts to overpower you. The success or failure of your undertaking to acquire highest bliss and absolute freedom lies therein. As soon as you give in the least to the attractions and repulsions of the world of senses, be sure you are letting yourself slip down from the position you ought to occupy, and there is no knowing how further down into the deepest abyss of darkness and ignorance you might fall. There is no greater danger for an aspirant after spiritual perfection than letting himself or allowing himself to be subjected by the life of the senses. It is really a question of life and death.

The self is self only as long as it retains its dharma or that which eternally is inherent in it as its nature. The inherent nature which makes the self is knowledge or consciousness, absoluteness and infiniteness, expressing itself in universal love, absolute purity, freedom from all external control, either of the senses or of the external circumstances or environments, absolute fearlessness, perfect justice and righteousness. The self being the eternal seer must be free from all pains and inherently blissful. So it is naturally full of compassion towards all beings whom it looks upon as its own manifestation. It knows no anger, except for the sake of suppressing unrighteousness and doing good to all beings. It knows no hatred. Falsehood it cannot tolerate except when it is necessary to lead a lower being gradually towards the highest

truth. For as a matter of fact, the world in its onward course is passing mostly from lower truths to higher truths, and there are certain truths concerning the conception of God, the ultimate principles of existence, that cannot be rightly grasped by all humanity at the present stage of its progress.

What is to be demanded from each individual is that he should put forth his best energies towards the realization of the highest he is capable of, and if this highest which marks the limit of his present capability falls short of the absolute perfection, he is not to be blamed for that. The only way to attain the highest, the absolute, is through the attainment of the relatively highest marking the utmost limit of capability, which is ever widening its horizon. It is through these several highest that as a matter of fact, the highest self-realization is achieved. So the relatively highest each time for the time being is the *swadharma* of each individual, literally meaning *swa*, one's own, and *dharma*, the expression of the highest self, the self that stands at the basis of each individual being as its mainstay and support. So even if the *swadharma* be full of dangers, difficulties, troubles or sorrows, or appear to be inferior or lower in respect of the dharma of another who may be seemingly in a better position, and the duties appertaining to whose position may appear to be better or easier of performance, one's own dharma or one's own duties that are expressions of the highest that one is capable of have to be attended to, even at the risk of one's life, and the duties appertaining to the position of others which might be duties in connection with the expression of the highest in them, ought not to tempt us into wrong paths.

For you cannot realize the absolutely highest, the goal of all, through the relatively highest self of others, for your own inner being is not connected therewith. The highest Lord is not really outside you. He is inside you and connected directly with the relatively highest self in you and therefore you can only attain it by discharging the duties which are expressions of the relatively highest selves in you at each stage of your progress.

So it is laid down that our own duties, *swadharma*, have to be discharged even at the risk of our life and never should we be misled into undertaking the duties belonging to others, as it would be dangerous for the reason that we shall be dislodged from the position which is ours and led astray into paths which are not calculated to lead us to our own goal.

Here the question arises as to why it is that we are led into erroneous paths and commit sinful actions, though as a matter of fact we do not in the heart of our hearts desire to commit those actions. For what is lying in our Inmost Self must be in accordance with our inmost desire, and when that has within itself only the root of all virtues such as compassion and love, why should it be that, as if dragged down by some external force, we should be led away from the right path into tortuous ways of vice and sin. The Inmost Self, in expressing and asserting its existence to itself, has to become active, assume, apparently though, an objective form for the time being and undergo changes, as it were to all outward appearance. This, its activity towards change, modification and objectification, is the root principle of *rajoguna* and lies at the basis of the manifestation of desire, *kama*, and repulsion *krodha*. Its movement towards a certain change being a movement in consciousness appears as its movement propelled by a certain desire towards a certain object, and at the same time it appears as being repelled by a certain object which is contrary to the one it is moving towards. In the course of time, the principle of desire and the principle of repulsion and anger are developed and these two become the springs of all sinful and vicious acts.

The real nature of the self remains ever the same, full of love, compassion and bliss, but the two principles of desire and anger that have been developed on account of its activity towards objective manifestation by the principle of *rajoguna* envelop the real nature of the self, covering its inherent love and compassion with their own darkness of vicious and sinful propensities. As long as the self remains externalized and inclined towards the objective side of the universe, tending to

satisfy itself by enjoying pleasures of the senses, so long the principles of desire and anger which are the developed fruits of externalized tendencies of the self remain all powerful. In spite of the inmost nature of the self being virtuous, holy, loving and compassionate, they drag him down towards the lowest depths of sins and inequities. The senses, the will, the manas, the buddhi are all enveloped into the dreadful darkness of the forces of desire and anger, and so they all point towards the path that is favoured by them, desire and anger. They arose out of the objective tendencies of the self towards self-manifestation and therefore it is that the very root of manifestation of the self lies in the root principle of desire.

So even the *buddhi*, the ordinary reason or calculating reason, the reason that weighs and considers the consequences good or bad of our actions so far as our welfare here in this world is concerned, the world differentiating reason, is subject to the influences of desire and anger. It is not safe to trust ourselves or to put our trust and faith in the guidance of this reason. The real path of virtue or dharma lies hidden in the recesses of our Inmost Self which stands behind reason, through which the reason reasons, but which is not grasped by the reason as something objectively differentiated and discriminated; which stands behind the senses through which the senses sense but which the senses cannot grasp as an object of senses; which stands behind will (the manas) through which the will wills but which is not willed by the will. This self, the inner self, the inner life of all, the real life has to be approached for actual guidance and illumination of the path that leads us to our ultimate goal and destiny.

In order to let this self indicate what is most approved of by it, what suits it and what agrees with its innermost expression, we have to suppress for the time being, when approaching it for light and guidance, all activity of the senses, indriyas, the will (the manas) and the reason (buddhi). When all these various activities are at the lowest possible ebb, the inner expression of the Inmost Self as universal love and compassion wells up within us, the light

goes up, the darkness enshrouding our path is torn asunder and our duty of the situation that we occupy is revealed authoritatively as what we ought to do.

We should always beware of the desire-force and the anger-force. As long as they predominate, the real path that is to lead us to our goal would remain ever hidden from our view. Just as smoke which derives its source from the same root as fire covers up the luminosity of fire, just as the real form of the child in the womb is covered up by the membrane holding it within itself, so the real light of the self that shines on the path is covered up and obstructed from our view by this principle of desire, which has its origin in the very objective activity of the self. It is the most dangerous enemy as it has got its fortress within us and is, from its very nature, in the occupation of all our strongholds, the indriyas, the manas and the buddhi. It arose in the very beginning of objective manifestation as shrutis declare *prajapati akamyat* and hence it is that no principle of our nature, even up to the buddhi is free from its approach.

It is only the self that underlies all without being touched or affected by any that is really free, and therefore in order to acquire freedom, in order to put ourselves on the path towards freedom we have to discard all the suggestions, the insinuations, the promptings of the various faculties our nature is possessed of – rather we have to suppress the activities of all our faculties in order to ascertain, discover, reveal the expressions, the inspirations, the impulses of our real self. It is only after these impulses of the real self are revealed that the other principles of our being or the faculties of our nature are to be put in subordination to those impulses to carry them out into practice, to fulfil them and to realize the dictates of the self in outward actions. Of course it is not possible for the ordinary individual to succeed in suppressing the activities of these senses, manas and the buddhi, and therefore it is not possible for him to be absolutely perfect in character. But the road to perfection lies in using our best endeavours discovering what is our own

dharma, the dharma of the position we occupy: by trying to suppress the lower principles on every occasion that we have to decide what our duty is as much as we can, and by gradual and constant training to bring these principles or faculties into subordination to our Inmost Self.

The indriyas or the senses are strong no doubt, but will, the manas or the power of attention, is stronger than them. The senses become powerless when the manas withdraws its attention from the objects, and stronger than this manas is buddhi, or reason. For when the reason settles the course to be pursued for our wellbeing, and the settlement or decision of reason becomes a conviction of our own inner nature. Manas cannot but act up to that condition and must withdraw itself from the course leading to the opposite direction. So in order to bring the strength of manas to our own side and to put it against the strength of kama or desire, we have to bring to our aid the strength of buddhi or the reason. But stronger still, rather the strongest of all, the greatest of all is the Self which stands quite pure and unstained, inaccessible to the assaults of kama or desire.

We have to repair to the self as our last refuge, restraining all the lower principles by the infinite strength of this Inmost Self of ours, in order to get rid of the evil influences of kama or desire, the most difficult of obstacles to be conquered, and thus frustrate it in its efforts to overthrow the supremacy of the divine self. As soon as the dreadful enemy of ours, which covers our eternal glory as the glory of fire is covered by smoke, or the luminosity of the mirror is covered by dust or the embryo is covered by the thin membrane of the womb, is destroyed and scattered to the winds, the self asserts itself in its eternal majesty and reveals its nature which is full of eternal bliss and self-luminous consciousness having ever as its background the Absolute Self which knows no limitation of any sort, remaining ever in itself as it is ever beyond all consciousness and unconsciousness, beyond all change, ever the same *sadchidanand swaroop*.

DISCOURSE 3

Chapter 4: The Yoga of Wisdom

Chapter 4 commences with an account of how this knowledge divine, which has been expounded in the first three chapters, has been handed down from teacher to teacher. The first teacher of this transcendental metaphysics was Lord Krishna himself. From Him, Vivasvan learnt. From him it was learnt by Manu, and Ikshvaku received it from Manu. Thus it came handed down from generation to generation in the line of rajarishis or kshatriya philosophers. A question might arise here as to why is it that the rajarishis alone have been mentioned as the custodians of this knowledge, indicating perhaps that the Brahmarishis did not receive it in the first instance, and if they learnt it at all, they must have learnt it second-hand from the rajarishis or kshatriya philosophers.

What seems to be indicated here is corroborated by the *Chhandogya Upanishad* wherein occurs an anecdote explaining how the science or philosophy of reincarnation and the law of karma was not known to the Brahmans, it having been known only to the kshatriyas. Therefore, the king mentioned therein did part with this knowledge in favour of the Brahmans with some reluctance. Anyhow, it seems to be more probable that the metaphysical side of the vedic literature was developed more by the ancient kshatriyas than by the Brahmans, who being devoted more to the ritualistic

aspect of the vedic religion could not naturally be expected to turn towards lines of independent thought and speculation. It seems to have been thus left to the kshatriyas who are votaries of the goddess of freedom and independence to pursue lines of independent enquiry and philosophical research, and thus reap the reward of landing upon truth of valuable importance: the knowledge of divinity and divinity hidden potentially and dormant within all beings.

It is only through the course of evolution that the knowledge divine gradually unfolds itself in accordance with the development achieved by the race, and especially the point of development reached by those typical beings of the race who happen at the particular time to be fit to receive it, or to be more accurate, to grasp it by their inner vision. The divine being, the universal Self, the first manifested aspect of the absolute reality standing behind, is the Inmost Self of all beings. It is this Inmost Self that lies at the root of all further particularized and individualized manifold finite manifestations. These finite individualities, having come down to the plane of prithvi in its grossest aspect, begin to ascend up by the setting in or the assertion of subjectivity with a view to reach the ultimate subjectivity or the Inmost Self of all lying at the root of all manifestation. Thus in its course of ascent upwards the coarsest and the grossest finite prithvi, a manifestation of mineral entities, gradually passes through the different stages of vegetable, animal and human, and ultimately reaches the point of absolute self-realization.

During these stages of human evolution critical times arrive when, on account of the preponderance of evil tendencies, the whole course or evolution seems to be threatened with utter ruin and destruction. The finite individualities get bewildered at the sight of the danger looming on the horizon and even the highest of them cannot by their own limited individual powers and faculties imagine a way of escape out of the impending catastrophe. It is at such critical times that the eyes of all and especially the choicest of the human race are turned towards the Inmost

Self for light and guidance. This light and guidance does come when it is really needed and sought for.

For the fulfilment of its mission this light, in accordance with the inherent laws of thought and consciousness, enters into the being most suitable to receive it, effects its purpose and fulfils its mission through the instrumentality of that being. The relation that subsists between the Inmost Self and the entire universe is something analogous to what exists between our own physical organism and our inner consciousness which regulates, controls and adjusts it to the surrounding circumstances and necessities. We do notice that at critical moments of impending danger, a power, a somewhat miraculous power, appears and brings about unknown and unthought of adjustments to protect the organism and prevent it from ruin. Similar adjustments and adaptations have been taking place in the history of the world from time to time. They cannot be explained by any other hypothesis than this: the moment needed the light from within and the leaders of humanity for its sake dived within; some sort of unification with the Inmost Self, weak or strong, temporary or permanent, was established with the Inmost Self. After this unification, the being or teacher who succeeds in effecting it can be looked upon as an avatar. For in him it can be said the supreme Self has descended to help humanity to set itself on the proper course suitable for its evolution at the particular stage of development it has reached.

All the avatars cannot be equal, for they can represent the Inmost Self only in proportion to the development attained by them. But they all agree in this, that they appear when the entire humanity or a particular portion of it is going astray from the path and most needs the help of his guiding hand to have itself set right and brought round. The avatar of the moment thus is actuated by a strong desire to bring the light from within himself, the Inmost Self, as much as lies in its power and to use it for the solution of the problems that are afflicting humanity at that particular moment.

Thus the knowledge that comes to the avatar comes to it for the sake of humanity. The whole being of the avatar being permeated by a strong love and compassion, the light that has come to it gets diffused through it everywhere. Apart from this common element, each avatar differs according to the capabilities attained by each being who happens to act as the avatar, the stage of evolution achieved by the race which the avatar belongs to, and the necessities of the time which have made the appearance of an avatar essential.

There have been such avatars in the history of thought as well as in the history of action. The avatar with which we are concerned had the glory of being both an avatar of thought as well as of action. The history of thought tells us that before the appearance of our avatar, the teacher of the *Bhagavad Gita*, there was a hopeless confusion of thought on account of the disputes that had arisen between one set of philosophers, the followers of the jnana marga, and another set, the followers of the karma marga. Before these disputes could arise the philosophy of the law of karma had been discovered and taught to humanity by the master minds that had gone before. Humanity had learnt that it can never perform any action without getting itself modified in some direction, whether for good or for evil, and this modification must go on forever as long as man continues to act and perform its various duties.

The modification effected by the karma or action of each individual is due to the fact that no action can be undertaken by anyone without thinking about it from before. Each thought, intention or motive that precedes an action refers in general to the interest of the individual to some want that the individual feels as a finite being, and which he tries to remove by adopting a certain course of procedure. Thus each action necessarily brings about the idea that the doer of the act is finite, limited or conditioned, and being pressed by wants due to his finiteness, he is bound to remove them.

Thus it necessarily follows that each time the individual acts the idea of his finiteness becomes strengthened more

and more, and if he goes on persisting in producing actions or karmas, his appearing to himself as finite will be always acquiring adamant strength. The bondage lies in this appearance of oneself as finite, as objective, as limited, as full of wants and miseries. So the freedom or *nirvana* lies, on the other hand, in rooting out this appearance of oneself as finite and in realization of the truth: that the finite is only a moment in the life of the Infinite; it has no existence as independent and separate from that, but only appears as the objective phase of the Infinite Consciousness being summed and transformed into the Absolute and the Infinite which only really exists.

The realization of this truth universalizes the individual consciousness and roots out the feeling of want and miseries altogether. It locates the feeling of want in the apparent objective side of the Infinite Consciousness, which remains as the eternal seer or witness of all the objective phases. In its own Self as the eternal witness no modification on the objective side that is undergoing changes can affect it. The wants and miseries thus drop off from the Infinite Consciousness, the witness and the seer, and cease to work any modification of that consciousness in such a way as to make the seeing consciousness identify itself with the objectively modifying aspect of it.

Thus we see that the life of action stands in contradiction to the life of knowledge that aims at the realization of the truth which leads to freedom. This contradiction had to be solved; the antithesis of action and knowledge had to be reconciled and synthesized into the life that combines the essential principle of both, sums them up and transcends them, arriving at perfect harmony and truth.

The two schools that were fighting had relative truths on their side, but one thing had been lost sight of. There could not be any attainment of knowledge as long as total necessity of undertaking actions had not been got rid off. For according to the principle of knowledge, it was impossible to perform any action without strengthening and deepening

the roots of bondage, and the attainment of freedom would seem to become well nigh impossible. How could man, as constituted at present, be free from all action whatsoever? Even the life of knowledge that he would lead implies his being active at least for the sake of knowledge. Thus by his own activity in acquiring knowledge, he would on the principle as enunciated above, be forging fetters to bind himself.

The solution to this difficult situation was discovered by the avatar, the teacher of the *Gita*. He teaches that the root of bondage does not lie in action or karma, but in the desire to obtain the consequences or the fruits of our action. Whenever an action is undertaken with a view to obtain some fruits or result for oneself, the action has a tendency to strengthen the limitation, the limitation conception, of the individual, and to create bondage for him. Action can be undertaken also from a different standpoint. The truth is that the Infinite Consciousness is ever active, is ever realizing itself, and for that purpose is throwing itself or projecting itself as its own objective, negating that objectivity and bringing it back to itself in identity to its subjectivity. The transformations of the activity of this Infinite Consciousness on the various planes as traced in the appendix have also to be active, for they all derive their existence from the activity of the Infinite Consciousness and so partake of its nature. The only difference is that the activity becomes less and less as the transformation becomes more and more objectified, but at any point of the evolution it is impossible to find it absolutely inactive and inert.

The self-realizing activity of the infinite necessarily sets up an objective before it has to stop there for a moment to let the suggested activity gather shape and concreteness, which is necessary for it to 'other' itself. Then it is that this 'othered' objectively is again actively taken up by the current of consciousness and carried back to its subjective source. This momentary stopping of the thought activity at the objective point thus set up creates the point of inaction, rest

or *tamas*. At the same time, in spite of this incessant activity of consciousness in self-realization, it can be said that there is no action at all. For whatever activity there is, it is only of the nature of thought, of self-reflecting thought, which is taking place without any special effort or exertion so smoothly, calmly and peacefully as to compare small things with great; the organ of sight perceives the colours of any forms of objects lying within the range of its vision.

The activity of Infinite Consciousness, being reflected in the consciousness itself as standing behind this activity as an idea or thought merely, this consciousness that catches hold of this activity only as a reflection in itself of its own activity can be said to be entirely at rest and inactive, '*santivat* in action'. The calm waters of the lake wherein the reflection of the sun is seen cannot be said to be active in order to catch the reflection. The reflection is there in accordance with the laws of nature, and the least agitated and the calmest water is the best able to reflect the image of the sun. So the consciousness, as knowing its own activity as reflecting its own energy since it is ever calm and unagitated, is ever at absolute rest or *shant*.

We find that the Infinite Consciousness itself has the principle of absolute rest or calmness standing behind the principle of infinite self-realizing conscious activity, which realizes itself by always passing through momentary periods of rest or cessation of that activity. But both these principles of activity and rest are on the objective side of consciousness, the side of the seen and the known, the principle underlying both being the principle that knows them and reflects them as what they are. So at every plane of evolution, we must have these three principles working, however modified their activity might be, in accordance with the nature of the plane wherein the thought activity transformed itself.

So at each plane and in each being there would be an inherently active principle and a principle of rest and behind both the principles of Infinite Consciousness as realizing both, summing them up and transcending them in its true

nature. Therefore, whatever activity exists in each individual is due to the nature of Infinite Consciousness itself. If the individual is true to himself it must be in accordance with the laws of his being, the laws being the expression of the principles that are at work in the entire universe around him, and that should have been at work to bring about his existence as an individual being. The activity thus, that is based in his own nature and constitution, that is demanded by the highest and noblest in him at the stage of evolution he has reached, is necessary to keep up and maintain the machinery of the universe.

His action to satisfy the demands of his nature at its highest and noblest cannot be said to be in truth an action for his own sake alone but must be regarded in truth as an action undertaken for the life of the entire universe. If any individual thinks he acts for himself and desires the result to come to himself in his individual capacity, he is really mistaken. He ought to think that when he is acting in accordance with the demands of his own true nature at its highest and best, that he is acting in unity with the universal self, standing behind the entire universe. The results of his activities would be for the whole universal life and not for his own individual self alone. The sense of duty arises in him as this universal-self-being, his Inmost Self, demands within him as what he ought to do in the circumstances he is placed as a part and parcel of the universal life. If he obeys the call of duty he does it for its own sake as an essential part and moment of the universal life, not caring the least as to how far his own individual interests, if they conflict with the call of duty in him, would have to suffer.

Thus the performance of duty for its own sake, at all risks and in the face of insurmountable difficulties cannot be calculated to strengthen the fetters of bondage. It would rather, by emphasizing the universal aspect of consciousness, gradually root out the sense of individuality, lift the individual out of his narrowness and limitedness up into the universal and the infinite. At the same time that the

individual is acting up to the dictates of his duty he would, in view of the principle of consciousness, the witnessing and reflecting consciousness, be realizing himself as the witness, the seer of all these activities, remaining in its own self ever in calmness and peace.

Thus he would be at absolute rest and at the same time infinite in activity, allowing only momentary pauses in obedience to the principle of objective rest, and never allowing the idea that he is a limited individual to come and overshadow his mind. The nature of activity to bind one to individuality will be transformed if one acts up to these principles into a freedom-producing and universalizing tendency. The absurd position of trying to remain absolutely inactive when nature of man demands his being active is avoided. The defect is lying in not perceiving that activity is as much inherently rooted in the Infinite Consciousness as the principle to realize itself in knowledge and universality.

The followers of the jnana marga had perceived only one side of the truth when they asserted that the Infinite Consciousness, the *Para Brahma* or the *Paramatma* knows and sees. The other element of the same truth had been overlooked, that It knows Its own activity, and for the sake of knowing it acts, and at the same time it stops and ceases to act from time to time. Thus It is both active and inactive and both Its being active and inactive is for the sake of Its realizing Itself. This Its self-realization is the object of its knowledge. The revelation of this truth needed a penetration into the inmost nature of the self and the glory of the *Gita* Teacher lies in shedding full light on it and making this truth one of the strongest foundations for the special doctrines that He teaches.

The followers of the karma marga had also been attaching a very narrow meaning to the line of action. Their main action or karma was made up of the performance of religious ceremonies in the form of worship of gods which were known as *yajnas*. They advocated that it is by the performance of these ceremonies that the highest aim of the

life of man can be attained. They ridiculed the followers of the jnana marga as only running after mere shadowy things which had no existence whatsoever. They said that action was necessary for the attainment of everything and a life of inaction or thought in speculation was absolutely useless and unfruitful. Their yajna, made up of material offerings to the various gods, was no doubt calculated to awaken in the lower order of humanity a higher and nobler conception of divinity. But it lacked the breadth and the universality of conception, which could embrace the life of the universal as an object of its attainment. Therefore, the life that was led in merely performing these ceremonies could not rise higher to the conception of universal life. That was the reason why the followers of the jnana marga looked down upon it as quite unsuitable for the attainment of Infinite Life and Consciousness.

Gradually the evolution of religious conceptions had developed the idea of the Supreme Being as one universal life pervading the entire world of finite beings. This Infinite Being, the *Para Brahma* of the Veda, was the Universal Being underlying the conception of the various gods that were worshipped during yajnic ceremonies. The ceremonies then came gradually to be looked upon as made up of offerings to this Universal Being, who came to be known as yajna itself. Therefore, it was possible now to give a lift to the conception of yajnas, and to bring it into harmony and reconciliation with the conception of the school of jnana.

Man could be looked upon as being made up of the seer in his absoluteness, witnessing the spectacle of the manifestation of universal life and the various faculties, powers and capacities that were the effects of the workings of the principles of thought activity. These faculties, powers and capacities that a man was possessed of were the offerings that he could place at the altar of the Universal Being who was within him as the seer and the witness of the entire universal activity. This offering would constitute the highest yajna that an individual could perform, the numerous other

yajnas being, only partial manifestations or realizations of the highest conception of yajna.

Just as the followers of jnana marga had committed the error of overlooking the principle of activity in the Infinite Consciousness, the followers of karma marga had overlooked the fact that the material of the offerings that were made to the gods really belonged or were due to the activity of the principles of universal life. They did not belong to their individual self, and therefore, they were bound to make those offerings not with a view to get some reward in return, but as what was due to the yajna or Universal Being, as what was his own. The withholding of this offering would rather amount to a sort of mis-appropriation of what did not belong to them.

Thus the system of yajnas or sacrifices was uplifted from an ordinary worship of limited gods to the realization of the universal principle of all existence through and in the life of unselfish and disinterested activity. Yajna was not taken to be action in ritualistic ceremonies, but it embraced all activity, not only activity in relation to some external divinity, but activity proceeding from and based upon the inspiration of the internal divinity to the extent it happened to have evolved within each individual being in due course of its self-unfoldment and self-realization. This activity might assume various forms, but in principle it was all the same being, meant for the satisfaction and self-realization of the indwelling evolving spirit, seeking infinite self-development and absolute self-satisfaction. The ritualistic ceremonies, which consist in offerings made to divine beings for their self-satisfaction, have to be understood as a symbol of the real yajna, which consists in living the life in such a way as to ensure the highest possible realization of the possibilities of our inmost divine nature.

In this way it is that the evils of attachment, fear and anger drop off, and the inmost spirit, by the gradual steps of development and unfoldment of its innate divine nature, reaches the ultimate point of divine realization and absolute perfection.

Then there was the idea that action produced bondage, because it always proceeded from self-regarding and self-interested motives, thus strengthening the idea of limitation and want in the individual self. For as long as the action continued, the idea that the self is limited continued to reign supreme in the mind of the individual performing the action. Now, the activity of yajna, being based upon the idea that it is for the realization of Infinite Divinity lying potentially within the individual self, would, as long as it continues, be strengthening the idea of the infinity and the universality of the Self. It would, instead of creating bondage, irresistibly lead towards freedom based upon the realization of the infinite in and through the ever-developing and ever-evolving finite and individualized aspect thereof. The perception of these new ideas through the help of which the systems of jnana marga and karma marga were each brought to recognize their own imperfections and the line through which they could perfect themselves in harmonious reconciliation with each other, giving rise to a new original synthesis, was the most glorious task performed by the Divine Teacher of the *Gita* in the field of thought.

A religion declines when the old synthesis becomes inapplicable to the circumstances that arise on account of the higher evolution and development of humanity. At such times, the individual who succeeds in retiring within himself, within the recesses of his inmost being; and perceiving the higher principle which the conflicts of the old apparently contradictory principles can be solved; and being impelled by the love of universal humanity offers the principle discovered by him to all and applies the same to the solution of the pressing problems of the day, becomes the avatar of the age.

By avatar is meant the individual who has the most perfect perception of the truth necessary for the age. As a matter of fact, every important avatar had several minor avatars contemporaneous with it, helping it to fulfil the mission of its life. The idea of the avatar has been explained

in the very beginning of Chapter 4. As it is necessary to understand the subsequent portions of the *Gita*, we shall have to bear in mind that the Teacher speaks in double capacity as the individual, the evolving self, having reached the highest limit of the development of the age, and also as representing the absolute, supreme spirit, whose light had descended into Him and was illumining the inner recesses of His being, revealing within the hidden principles of the workings of the universe.

The individual self, thus feeling the presence within him of the Real Self, the Absolute and the Infinite Self, looks upon his individuality as having melted away like snow before the light of the Infinite Sun, and being in identity and unity with the Infinite Me, speaks of himself as the Infinite and the Absolute Me. His own individual inclinations, proclivities and tendencies, desires and passions, having dropped off, he speaks of himself as the ineffable glorious Being, the object of attainment for the entire humanity. It is from this standpoint of the Absolute Me or 'the Me' that Lord Sri Krishna commences his teachings especially in Chapter 4.

There is a reference to this Self of the Lord even earlier, but it is more explicit and emphatic as we proceed further and further. We have to bear in mind that there is always a difference between the mere naked, indefinite and vague statement of a truth and a clearer, more accurate, more systematic and detailed presentment of it. We will find in the *Gita* that the Divine Teacher was very cautious in this respect. He very gradually and slowly unfolds the nature of his inmost divinity as He finds the mind of Arjuna prepared to receive it. In respect of the ideas that Sri Krishna has expounded in the *Gita*, the same principle applies. It is not that in the earlier scriptures they were wholly wanting; rather we do find in the Ishopanishad vague and indefinite hints in the same direction. They represent the attempts that the higher minds had been making to realize the same object, but the glory of Sri Krishna lies in grasping the central

kernel of the truth and in making a clear, accurate and full presentment of it, which is a characteristic to be met in important avatars.

In fact, the Teacher himself says that he had taught the doctrine in his previous lives to earlier humanity, represented by the earlier rajarishis. While He remembered His past lives and actions which were many, Arjuna, on account of his undeveloped consciousness, could not go back into the secret chambers of his memory wherein the incidents of his past life were stored up. That was the only point of difference that could be pointed out between a highly developed being like Sri Krishna and one like Arjuna, still low in the scale of evolution. It is also pointed out that Sri Krishna, who had reached the point of divine realization within himself and had become one with the unborn, unchangeable Lord of all in His inmost self-realization, had of His own free will and independently, without the compulsion of prakritic forces, rather holding within His hands the inner springs of self-consciousness that constitute the prakriti, manifested Himself as an avatar to establish the kingdom of righteousness on this earth.

Thus the peculiar feature of His doctrine is that the three main elements of human nature: the intellect, the will and the emotions, must by the performance of yajna, which is based upon the principle that these elements that have become individualized during the course of objective evolution, have to be universalized by turning back the current into a subjective course. It is necessary, in order to effect this, to retire into one's inmost heart or self and then realize the unity of all beings. This realization the intellect will perform by means of jnana, which consists of a metaphysical study of the principles of the universe in their evolutionary and involutionary course; and by strong concentration of all the energies of thought, accompanied with the meditation upon each principle in relation with others; and as connected with and arising out of the principles that stand behind each as casually connected with them.

This method has to be pursued until the entire universe of objective existence gets resolved into its ultimate basis. The will, at the same time, has not to be neglected. It is this will that has taken the most important part in bringing about the state of limitation and bondage. It is this will which appears as the will-to-live-to-enjoy, which though not originating the finiteness of our nature, makes it acute, strong and vigorous, confirms it and brings about its concreteness. So, if this principle be left alone, it may work havoc and bring about ruin and destruction. Hence, it has to be turned back and universalized. The will-to-live for the sake of the individual has to give place to the will-to-live for the sake of the universal. The activities of the will as karma for the sake of the individual have to give place to its activity for the sake of the universal as yajna. The poisonous element, introduced into our nature by the selfish activities of the will, has to be neutralized by the disinterested and altruistic activities undertaken for the sake of universal love and compassion, as demanded by our own highest self, for its own sake without any regard for any ulterior recognition, reward or recompense.

The third element is the emotion. This had made almost permanent the bondage set up by the intellect or *buddhi* in its outgoing and objectifying course by setting up differences and limitations based thereon, and strengthened and concretized by the selfish activities of the will, the *karmabandhan* of the individual. It is the emotions, that bind down the self to the body and those connected with the body in strong ties of affection and make us feel that without the body we can neither exist nor have any enjoyment. Then we proceed to entwine round our embodied self the connections and affections of numerous other embodied individuals. The emotions then have to be universalized. Instead of feeling our oneness with the body, we must feel our oneness with the entire universe which is, as it were, the body of the Universal Self.

Thus feeling our oneness, our love and affection should now embrace the entire universe of being, with the

Lord of all our Inmost Self as the central soul, with the entire objective universe of existence as the vehicle of its manifestation. This Lord of all ever seeks to realize itself through the limited and infinite vehicles by gradually evolving from within them the Infinite and the Absolute Self which really lies at the root of all manifested existence. Our emotions must be unified with this inmost Lord of all and feel as He feels and act as He prompts us to act. There must be a strong bond of love to tie our individual self as long as it continues to exist separate with this Universal Lord of love. The way to realize this love is to feel our oneness with all, to suffer with the suffering world of beings, and to dedicate whatever energies we, as individuals, happen to possess at the service of the Lord, the yajna, to act in absolute unity with Him as manifested in our Inmost Self, in impulses of benevolence, justice, etc, to help Him in His attempt to realize Himself in and through the world of finite and objective existence.

Thus the yogic emotions require us to feel for all as ourselves, and the yogic will requires us to further the cause of progress in all directions to the utmost of our efforts. Thus, if life be lived with the intellect engaged in solving and mastering the mysteries of existence, leading to the ultimate discovery and affirmation of the one Absolute existence by jnana yoga, the emotions in feeling oneness with all in love and compassion by bhakti yoga, and the will in realizing the emotions, by performing acts of universal love and compassion by karma yoga. The bondage of *karma* or selfish desires must ultimately be thrown off and we shall, in due course, regain and realize our *swaraj* or the kingdom of righteousness within us.

This comprehensive view of life, its aims and its realizations, needed an avatar to put it forth before the world, and the divine teacher of the *Gita* indicates this as one of the important missions for which He was here in this world. He says clearly that in spite of His taking birth and living an active life, He could not be in bondage as His

life was permeated by knowledge. It is also said that one who succeeds in understanding and completely mastering *tattwatita*, the principle of his life and manifestation, conquers the principle that creates bondage and after leaving this body does not return again to this mundane existence and goes up to Sri Krishna and becomes unified with Him.

The essential element that goes to bring about this unification with the Absolute Lord is the conquest of attachment, fear and anger. It is these three principles of our emotional nature that constitute the obstacles to our self-realization. They have to be overcome by the purifying influence of knowledge which shows us, by an analysis of the principles of human nature and the forms of existence surrounding us, that there is no reason to yield to any kind of attachment, fear or anger.

The first enemy to our spiritual progress is the principle of attachment, *raga*. It is based on the feeling that our own self is incomplete, imperfect and can only have satisfaction and happiness when it gets the objects of the world for its enjoyment. The feeling of want arises on account of our consciousness losing itself in identification with the various passing modifications of its own in the form of sensations and perceptions. As a matter of fact, consciousness which is our inmost nature can and ought to be conscious of its modifications without being completely identified with any of these, realizing all the while that the various modes cannot be itself in its totality, but can only be its objectifying phases, leaving its own Self standing by itself alone, absolutely unaffected, complete and entire.

This realization has to be attained by constant study, analysis and meditation until the truth begins to be felt as it is, and the modifications cease by the force of meditation, based upon constant study and analysis, to draw down the consciousness or the self into identity with the passing modes in the form of sensations and perceptions. Then the higher spiritual experience begins to dawn upon our

inmost consciousness, the experience of freedom from being affected by the sensations and perceptions. It is the peculiar experience of consciousness in its own nature, freely overflowing all bounds of existence in its currents of Infinite Consciousness. All forms of existence are realized as an expression of its own objectifying inclination, without affecting in the least its own pure, unlimited, absolute nature.

It has to be borne in mind that the effect produced by the sensations and perceptions, whether outside our physical organism or inside it, do not obstruct us only when they appear as desires or passions. They also affect us and produce the feeling of limitedness even when they do not culminate in clear desires or hankerings after them. The mere fact that they are being perceived, and in the act of perception, the consciousness perceives them as so many finite sensations and perceptions and apprehends itself as becoming limited. In relation to those sensations and perceptions, the sense of our own self being limited and finite is being produced. Therefore, even when there are no desires to make us entirely miserable, we only have the consciousness of a finite individualization which, although better and superior to that of one afflicted with desires, is still miserable inasmuch as it does feel its infiniteness. It has an existence that is being constantly knocked into by latent desires, latent feelings of want and limitations which do manifest into actual desires in the course of time.

The goal to be attained is the consciousness which does not put itself into relation with the sensations and perceptions as if they were something outside it and foreign to its nature, but it takes them in or holds them in itself. Similar to the many ripples upon the surface of the sea, objects of its consciousness springing up from its own inner depth by the operation of certain laws of thought-evolution, but remaining all along as subordinate elements of its nature and never capable of making themselves identical with the self-consciousness which has projected them on the external

screen. The point lies in fact in grasping the sensations and perceptions as mere objects of consciousness and the subjective side as doing nothing more than apprehending them as its objects or its own objectification without itself being one with them or objectively limited and conditioned.

This fact must be acknowledged to be true, for if consciousness could not keep itself to itself as the unaffected subject, it could not apprehend the sensations and perceptions as such, but would have lost itself in them and become unconscious. Consciousness being its nature, it does not lose itself, as a matter of fact, it does seem to lose itself in that it regards itself as related to them in its subjective side. Thus it looks upon itself as the finite perceiver of the finite sensations and perceptions. This seeming limitation of the consciousness makes it incapable of realizing the bliss of its infinite nature, therefore, this 'seemingness' of limitation has to be overcome and vanquished by study and meditation known as *jnana tapas*.

Following this line, when success is attained in uprooting the principle of attachment, the principles of fear and anger drop off themselves. There can be no fear of losing anything which is not desired, nor can there be anger at any obstruction towards the fulfilment of our desires, there being no desires to be fulfilled. These conditions being fulfilled, the man becomes full of God-consciousness or Krishna-consciousness (*manmaya*). At the same time, the being of that man is or becomes consciously based upon the being of God. The ultimate consequence is that he attains the nature of God and becomes God Himself (*madbhavamagata*) (4:10).

Those who understand this principle and act upon it cannot be bound by the fruits of their karma. Sri Krishna quotes his own instance in this respect. He carries on the entire world process towards its legitimate consequences, ever realizing that the process is being carried by the necessary laws of His being without in the least affecting His own real inmost nature, the source of those laws. So too for the individual who realizes all his activities as being rooted in the laws of

his being, and his own self being the source, regulator and master of those laws, and who engages in action, not because he desires the consequences thereof for his own sake, but because his own inmost nature regards the particular activity as one that ought to be followed. He remains as free from the taints of action as Lord Sri Krishna is and therefore, he exhorts Arjuna to engage in the activity that lay before him for the sake of supporting the cause of righteousness and freeing the world from the miseries that would flow unchecked, if unrighteousness were allowed to get the upper hand.

It has been especially emphasized here, that freedom from the bondage of actions or *karma* cannot be attained by a life of so-called inactivity. Though his inward nature calls upon him to be active, a man may be inactive merely because he shrinks from the troubles that the course of activity is calculated to bring down upon him. Inactivity in this case would be rooted in selfish considerations, considerations arising from the conception of himself as finite and limited, as being subject to troubles, worry and anxieties. Thus inactivity proceeding from such a conception, a fatal conception, can only strengthen it and lead him to still worse bondage and ruin.

If activity is undertaken with the realization that his self needs nothing for itself, and the position he has attained or is trying to attain, can only be attained by the entire world of humanity; if righteousness is maintained, and thus for the sake of the world which he loves as his own self, he ought to lay the best in his nature at the altar of the God of righteousness, then he cannot be bound or fettered by the consequences of his activity. Rather the troubles that he undergoes in this life of activity, he bears with fortitude, regarding them as too far beneath his nature and quite incapable of affecting the majesty of his glorious being. The activity of this sort strengthens the element of knowledge in his nature and makes him fit to attain absolute freedom.

Thus, it has been truly remarked by Bhagavan Himself, that it is so difficult to understand the principle of *karma*, or

action producing bondage, and *akarma*, or the principle of inaction leading to freedom. Even great thinkers or sages get deluded and do not understand the position in the right way. The mystery would stand revealed to those who dive deep into the matter and try to grasp the principle firmly that bondage or freedom does not lie in activity or inactivity, but in the inward attitude of ourselves with which the activity or inactivity is undertaken. Thus, the essential condition of bondage does not lie in outward action but in the inward attitude of the self. Action produces bondage or freedom by strengthening or weakening the attitude of the self to look upon itself as finite or limited.

If attachment is overcome and the mind is firmly fixed in the knowledge which realizes the entire universe as a manifestation of the thought-energy which the Absolute Consciousness is ever setting free towards self-realization through formal differentiation, and which remains ever in the realization of his inherent freedom, he gladly offers as a sacrifice for the benefit of the whole world the energies that he is possessed of, on account of the course of evolution that he has undergone previous to the attainment of his knowledge. Thus his activities, being for the sake of *yajna*, can produce no bondage and they all are merged in the Self of universal consciousness.

The question now arises as to whether these activities can be regarded as *yajnas*, calculated to strengthen the principle of freedom and weaken the principle of bondage. The principle is that it is the highest activity one's nature is capable of, in regard to the circumstances he is placed in, the capabilities he is possessed of, the powers he is blessed with, the needs of the world or the part of the world he is connected with. Bhagavan Sri Krishna mentions several *yajnas*, for example *Daiva Yajna*, *Brahma Yajna*. One of these *yajnas*, the *Daiva Yajna*, means that some yogis develop their own inner powers by contemplation and meditation of the *devas* or divine beings, manifestations of the absolute in relation to the particular provinces or spheres of the world process.

These yogis, by contemplation of these devas or divine beings, gradually widen the scope of their own inner bodies made up of the various *tattwas* or elements, and thus gradually try to universalize their limited shariras. Through the universalization of *shariras*, or bodies, they attain the universalization of their inward consciousness. They succeed in overcoming the limitations that obstructed the flow of their consciousness before this attainment. The contemplation of the devas implies an analysis and understanding of the principles that underlie the various *tattwas* as the devas are nothing more, nor less than the being of the Universal Self, reflected in or the subjective counterpart of the principles evolving into the manifested *tattwas*.

Another kind of *yajna* is the throwing in of the individualized self into the Universal Self after it has become identified with the *yajna* by means of incessant and continual *yajnic* activities. The means of this throwing in is said to be *yajna* or universalizing activity itself. The activities, which are based on disinterested and altruistic motives, motives that take into account the good of all, including the good of one's own self in the realization of universal good, are the only activities that can be said to be *yogic*. These activities lead the self, the individual self, onward towards the attainment of the Universal Self: luminous, all-consuming, all-revealing, all-knowing, Absolute Self or *Brahmagñi*. Such benevolent activities are not to be disregarded as they are the best means for the majority of mankind to attain the goal of self-realization.

Others perform *yajna* by restraining the senses and purifying them by means of the fire of *sanyam* or self-control. They make a firm resolve not to let the senses wander about and waste themselves in the enjoyment of the sensual objects. They perceive that it is through the external enjoyments of the senses that their inward consciousness is being at present disintegrated and dissipated, as it were, by having its rays scattered through the objectifying and externalizing activities

of the senses. However, if thrown back and concentrated upon itself, it would be sufficiently intense and luminous to reveal the secrets of the universe. Therefore, they find it necessary, in order to effect their purpose of attaining complete knowledge, to shut out the senses from all enjoyments whatsoever.

In order to do this, they have to illumine the fire of sanyam or self-restraint, having taken the vow never to allow the senses to have any sort of gratification whatsoever. This sanyam itself is a yajna. In the course of time, it causes the sensual personality to fall off, the sensual consciousness, as it were, to cease to be. On the ruins of the sensual existence the superstructure of the higher self, the self of knowledge, peace and bliss, begins to be raised which, in the course of time, rises to the highest point of absolute self-realization.

This yajna of sensual self-restraint is one of the most important steps that has to be taken when treading the path of higher spiritual progress. It has to be borne in mind that it is simply impossible to attain any success in our upward course without the senses being brought under our restraint and control. By practising this yajna, sensual self-restraint or sanyam, the senses which are only the various centres of consciousness, evolve in the course of time on account of the various objectifying activities of the self in connection with the various bhootas or objective tattwas, and have their energies concentrated and turned back within themselves. On account of restraint from enjoyments, the energies which were formerly going out of themselves, flowing like a channel of water and leaving nothing behind, become gradually converted into senso-intellectual energies. Earlier they were passively receiving sensations and becoming enslaved by them.

Now when sanyam has produced its effect, their nature becomes intellectually active: they had been only objective modifications of intelligence or consciousness. Becoming intellectualized, they begin to analyze and understand the nature of the objects they liked to enjoy before. It is by analyzing and understanding that they assimilate those

objects in their own nature of intelligence, realizing them as only so many modifications of the objective energy of consciousness under the stress of the laws of evolution. These objects thus lose their alluring character and become absorbed and unified by the fire that the senses have now kindled by means of *sanyam*. Therefore, it is said that others, rising still higher, throw the objects of the senses into the fire of the senses to be burnt up, purified, illumined and made one with the fire – that is, burning there in the region of the senses, being kept up by the burning fuel of *sanyam*, to work out and perform effectively the work of objective assimilation.

When the work of objective assimilation, or the analysis of the world of objects has been effected, the objects cease to allure and attract, the senses become steady and calm, tranquillity begins to reign, the activity of the *prana* begins to turn back upon itself to be restrained and held back. When this is perfectly withdrawn all the objective activities, including the pranic energies, begin to return subjectively into the self that stands behind, giving energy and activity to the principle of *prana*, which enlivens and inspires the senses.

The meaning of *prana* is the objectifying energy, which takes the self out towards the objective assertion and manifestation, that is a necessary step in the course of self-realization. It is this activity of *prana*, or objectification, which gives rise to the principle of reason or discrimination, *buddhi* or intellect, *manas* or will, *chit* or intelligence, and *ahamkara* or egoism, along with the other senses or ordinary *indriyas*.

All these activities are spoken of as *sarvanindriyakarmani*. It is the control of all these activities, their withdrawal, the throwing back into and along with the pranic activity, all taken together, being thrown into the *sanyam*, or meditation of the Absolute Self, which is awakened into active manifestation by means of *jnana*, the process of discrimination and analysis, applied to the principles underlying the manifestation of the universe.

The word *sanyam* used here, along with the word *yoga*, together making *atma sanyam yogagni*, deserves particular attention. The student of *yoga* understands very well that *sanyam* is the culminating point of *dhyana*, *dhyana* itself being the culminating point of *dharana*. So, in order to understand *sanyam*, we have first to understand *dharana*. *Dharana* is the fixing of the mind or *chit*, to be more accurate, upon a point which is necessary for the sake of complete illumination by the energy of consciousness in the course of being subjectively assimilated or unified with the individual self performing the process of *dharana*. When the *chit* succeeds in giving up all other objects, ideas, conceptions, except the one it is fixing itself upon, *dharana* is said to be accomplished, *desh bandhas chitasayadharna*.

But the other objects keep intruding upon the *chit*, and allowing it, even if *dharana* is accomplished, to have itself fixed upon the object of contemplation only for a short time. This practice of *dharana* has to be prolonged for a sufficient length of time in order to be able to keep the particular point of contemplation before the *chit* for the desired length of time. When this is attained, when the perception of the point upon which the *chit* has fixed itself continues incessantly, then *dhyana* is said to have been attained (*tatra pratyakatanata dhyana*).

All along during the process of *dharana* and *dhyana*, in the background the conception of the *chit* itself is present as the subjective seer or perceiver; the seer and the seen still standing apart. There is no perfect assimilation of the object into the subject so as to lift us up into the plane of absolute consciousness. For this purpose, the process of *dhyana* has to be carried on still further, higher up, deeper and more intense, until the individual self, appearing as *chit*, loses itself in the object of contemplation – the Absolute and the Universal-Self. At the stage of *dharana* the intruder is the object surrounding it which colours from time to time the effort of the *chit* to fix itself upon its object of contemplation.

As *dharana* develops into *dhyana* this intruder recedes and gradually drops down into non-perception, but another

intruder, which was in existence, but which was not felt so much in the presence of the stronger enemy of the surrounding world of objects, the individual self, appearing as *ahamkara*, or subjective egotism, now intrudes and appears during the process of *dhyana* setting itself up as the contemplator, meditator or *dhyata*. This intruder has to be suppressed by putting forth greater energy towards the object of contemplation, the Absolute Self, the *atman*, until the intruder vanishes out of sight and the Self, the object of contemplation, entirely fills up the space of consciousness, both subjective and objective, becoming one with our entire being. When this is accomplished *samadhi* is attained (*tadevarthamatra nibhasam swaroopashoonyamiva samadhih*).

Before perfection is attained one can only pass into *samadhi* by the steps of *dharana* and *dhyana*. When by constant practice of *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*, the capability of passing, at once into *samadhi* without the intervening steps, is attained, (when the performance of *dharana* and *dhyana* is so instantaneous that it is almost imperceptible and it seems that the point of *samadhi* has been immediately attained) the stage of *sanyam yoga* is reached (*trayamekatra samyamah*).

When this *sanyam yoga* has the Self as its object, perfect identity with the Absolute Self is attained and all limitations, impurities, wants and miseries are burnt up. Thus, kindled by knowledge, the throwing in of all activities of the senses and that of the *prana* into the fire of *atma sanyam yoga*, is the *yajna* which has to be attained through performance of the preceding *yajnas*. Thus there are various kinds of *yajnas*, all having as their central element the tendency to universalize the individual consciousness. Each one is higher than the other in proportion as it excels the other in its tendencies or influence to universalize the individual consciousness, to expand, develop and unfold its latent possibilities, until it coincides and becomes identical with the Absolute Consciousness.

The universalization is to be attained by adopting two methods: one is to part with limitations, the other

is to expand the consciousness by inward and subjective culture and discipline. Parting with limitations means the offering up of all our possessions, or as large a portion of it as practicable, including all our powers, faculties and capacities for the service and good of the entire universe. It is our clinging to the so-called possessions of ours that makes us individualized, limited and finite. Giving up the possessions, *parigraha tyaga*, makes us infinite. It is the attributes or the *gunas* that bring the Absolute into relation and make it relative 'attributelessness', taking it back into itself and making it Absolute. Thus the possessions, external and internal, instead of helping us to be free from want, are themselves the root of all wants and miseries as long as we think them to be our own as distinguished from the entire world. Therefore, in order to be free from the fettering effect of these possessions, whether material, physical or mental, there must be the constant practice of always sacrificing them at the altar of the Goddess of Benevolence, Righteousness and the Good of all. This *tyaga* or *dana* of whatever belongs to us for the good of all is *dravya yajna*.

Along with this method, the inward method of culture, and discipline, *jnana yajna*, has to be pursued so that positive expansion of the inner consciousness might go on *pari passu* with the dropping off of external limitations.

The first thing necessary for inward culture is *tapas*, which means that we have to make ourselves capable of bearing all sorts of pains, troubles and miseries without being affected by them. In order to bring about this condition of mind, we have in the first place to realize that the misfortunes and miseries are our greatest friends in our upward course. In order to bear troubles and miseries, the strength of the will has to be called into requisition. With a strong resolution of our inward will, we have to stand up fortified not to move an inch from our appointed task or duty, come what may. As the development of the will requires sufficient exercise, which needs, in its turn, the occasion and opportunity supplied by the troubles and misfortunes of the world, it is proper to regard them as

friends in disguise. Without them the development of the will would not be possible to a great extent.

As it is not possible to always have sufficient amount of misfortune to call out all the latent strength of the will, a system of training has to be devised so that by constant adherence to development of the will may be completely attained. Thus *tapoyajna*, is the utilization of the existing pains, miseries and misfortunes for the strengthening and expansion of willpower.

In order to supplement *tapoyajna*, we have to call in the aid of *yogayajna* for constant and systematic training and unfoldment of our inner faculties and powers in order that the unfoldment and expansion of the inner self may lead us to the attainment of the highest self-realization. The development of the will by *yogayajna* has to be aided by constant study, based upon observation and analysis of the phenomena of the universe. The strengthened will has to turn itself into the direction of close and deep study of the entire universe as a whole which stands as the objective counterpart of the subjective self. Without a complete grasp of what the objective counterpart really is, the subjective self cannot be comprehended and understood. Thus, the study of the universe, including whatever is objective in us, the physical, the pranic, the manasic and the buddhi, powers and faculties, with the principles that underlie them, conducted, in such a way as to lead us from the lower principles to higher ones until the highest principle, the Absolute Self, is reached, is *swadhyayayajna*. The perfection of this analytic study, by which the principle of the highest self is reached, leads to the attainment of *jnanayajna* wherein the subjective self, standing as the subjective counterpart of the entire universe, has to be made the subject of meditation and contemplation.

The individual self has to be thrown into it, both by the method of affirmation and the method of negation. The method of negation is based on the reason that the Absolute Self cannot properly be made the object of contemplation.

We have to seize it by the negation of what it is not. Thus, in the process of contemplation, the mind has to go on negating whatever idea may come up before it. By gradually emptying the mind of all ideas and putting an end to the process of ideation, *vasana*, it is brought back to a point where, being evacuated of all its contents, it drops into the Absolute Consciousness standing behind it. The method of affirmation, while admitting that the Absolute cannot properly be set before us as an object to be meditated on, asserts that we can to a certain extent, fix our individual consciousness on it, being conscious all along that what we are trying to fix the mind on is not the real Absolute itself but as good and high an aspect or manifestation of it as our development makes us capable of framing for ourselves. The reason for attempting to have an idea of the Absolute, according to our capability, is that the mind, being habituated to fix itself upon a positive something before it, must be given something positive for its contemplation if we intend to work along the line of least resistance.

The only danger is that we might take our idea of the Absolute for the time being, to be the Absolute itself and we might not be willing to progress further. Bear in mind that the Absolute as such can never be an object of contemplation and it is better to have its manifestation, the highest one we might be capable of contemplating for the time being, and to be always trying to reach higher and higher manifestations, until the highest is attained, the highest being the Universal Self, or the Oversoul, the establishment of identity which leads to the next step, the realization of the Absolute. Both of these methods, the positive and the negative, in connection with the contemplation of the Absolute come under the performance of *jnanyajna*.

The *yatis*, devotees, aspirants or workers towards spiritual perfection, follow these various *yajnas* in due course for the attainment of the highest perfection. It is in order to make themselves fit for this course of spiritual training that they have recourse to the practice of *pranayama*.

The prana, or the life breath, goes out in correspondence with the objectification of the consciousness as prana and comes back or is taken in correspondence with the subjectification of consciousness as apana.

The union, or the neutralization of these two currents of consciousness, represents the point of the Absolute Self. In the same manner, the union or the neutralization of the two currents of prana represents the attainment of the absolute point of the physical body or plane. In order to do this, as a stepping stone towards the attainment of the Absolute Consciousness, the apana has to be thrown out into the prana, the outgoing breath. The prana has to be thrown into the apana. It has to be clearly grasped here that these two movements of the pranic current are really due to the basic subjective and objective currents of consciousness. The entire problem that lies before us is to rise above these currents into the perfect consciousness of the Infinite and the Absolute. Therefore, it is necessary to catch hold of the same two currents, prana and apana, on the physical plane, and to unify them as to lead to the attainment of the absolute point of the pranic body which is pranayama. It has to be borne in mind that the pranic current has to be brought back to the apana point and when the apanic tendency becomes strong, it has to be overcome by setting up the pranic tendency until by gradual approximation of the one to the other, the neutral point is reached where both the pranic and apanic tendencies have been overcome in the attainment of pranayama.

Others again follow the method of limiting the quantity of food and the enjoyment of the senses. Thus they reduce the tendency of prana to objectify itself by means of self-restraint. This is, in a way, the havan of prana into prana, or the drawing back of the outgoing life breath into itself by means of keeping oneself aloof from sensual enjoyments.

All these people know what yajna is and they have their impurities removed by yajnic practices as detailed above.

These yajnic activities are followed by blissful rest which leads to immortality. An active life spent in yajnic activities

gives a peculiar enjoyment to its votary during the alternate periods of rest and blissful rest, which is said to be *yajna shesha*. Those who enjoy this well-earned rest attain the Absolute and the Eternal Self, while those who do not follow the life of yajna can have no happiness even in this world, not to speak of the next. In this way many kinds of yajnas are spoken of, described in the scriptures or the Vedas or literally, are spread out in the face or mouth of the Absolute Self, meaning that these yajnas lead us onward to, and bring us face to face with the Eternal and the Infinite. It has to be borne in mind that all these arise out of action and therefore, action itself is not to blame. Action for the sake of yajna, for the sake of inner purification, expansion and development, and for the sake of universal benevolence, does not create bondage. Rather it loosens the fetters of karma and sets us free on the onward path towards the attainment of the ultimate goal.

Realizing this truth and the principle of how action which is undertaken for the sake of the individual self binds, and how it does not bind, when it is undertaken for the sake of yajna, duty, love and inner purification, you will be absolutely free (4:32).

Of all these yajnas, one principle has to be kept in mind: the yajna that is more concerned with the side of knowledge and is calculated to develop in us the real knowledge of Self, is higher than the others that are concerned with the material and objective side. Yajna, as we have seen, is a word of wide significance and it includes all activities that are calculated to evolve the latent possibilities of our nature. Thus, it has within its range everything from our ordinary ceremonies, modes of worship and ordinary conduct in daily life, to the highest meditation of the Absolute Self, which destroys all illusive ignorance and makes one feel his unity with the Absolute and Universal Self.

These activities have to be ranged and classified. The one principle to be adopted in classification is that the more the particular yajna is jnanamaya or intellectual, the

higher it is, in so far as its yajna-ness is concerned. The reason is that the highest of all objects of attainment is real knowledge and therefore, anything that leads to that ought to be placed higher than others. The question arises: how is that knowledge to be attained and how is one to understand that he is working towards the attainment of that knowledge. One of the most important means of attaining knowledge or jnana is to be in constant company of those who can teach this knowledge.

Three things are recommended: pranipata, pariprashna and seva. *Pranipata* means that the student ought to be prepared to work out the problems with the firm faith that he will arrive at a solution in the course of time. He should keep his mind free from all sorts of bias and prejudices that he might have contracted in his previous life. The reason is that Brahmailidya has to deal so much with original ideas and conceptions that are not to be met within the ordinary course of our life, to a great extent, in order to completely assimilate the philosophy of the Absolute, and to forget the wrong ideas and notions about things that he has formed in his own mind. Unless he can do this, he would very likely commit the error of understanding the principles of jnana in a wrong way and apply those principles erroneously in the daily conduct of life.

The next condition necessary is *pariprashna* or questions in detail, resembling to a certain extent the questions that are used in cross-examination, necessarily leading to repeated questions about the same matter. As long as the point is not sufficiently clear, it should not be taken on mere faith, but it should be discussed and re-discussed until it is illuminated in all its bearings to the different points at issue. One should not be tired of so-called repetitions in the acquisition of atmavidya. The subject is so abstruse, the points are so subtle, that often when he thinks he has understood a particular point at a moment, at another moment the point may seem to be eluding his grasp in the thick darkness that generally surrounds him. In order to

have a complete grasp of all the points connected with the subject in all their various bearings, there must be repeated discussions, and one generally finds that even when a point seems to be clear, a re-discussion of the same point adds some more light on it and brings it nearer to him than before, and therefore, not only prashna but pariprashna, repeated discussions, is recommended as the method of attainment.

The third thing necessary is *seva* or service. The service of a teacher of knowledge means the service of the Universal Self, with which the teacher stands identified. He does not require any personal service as he has risen far above the limitations of the personal self, and if he still has in himself anything which he might care for, it is the Self in manifestation in the entire universe. The service of this manifested Self requires diffusion of knowledge, support for the cause of righteousness and therefore in order to serve the teacher the student must do all in his power to diffuse knowledge and destroy ignorance. Moreover, this activity on the part of the student will help him directly towards the acquisition of knowledge. In serving others he would be gradually rising over the limitation of his own personal self, if he performs the service for no other sake but itself, the sphere of his interests would be gradually widening until it includes the whole world within its grasp. In trying directly to impart knowledge, as far as he has been able to acquire it, he would be increasing the opportunity for discussion, one of the best means for the acquisition of knowledge itself.

By following these three methods the student will acquire knowledge, that he will have to perfect or assimilate by means of independent meditation upon the principles of knowledge that he has acquired.

The first process is exactly like the taking in of food for the maintenance or nourishment of the physical body. Mere taking in does not suffice however; the food that is taken has also to be digested and assimilated for the growth and development of the physical self. The development

of the spiritual self also requires that the knowledge taken in from outside should be assimilated by means of independent thought and contemplation upon the same points. This is known as *manana*. We are not to suppose that this *manana* has to be absolutely postponed until the first stage of *shravana* is completely finished. Rather, the process of *manana* has to be followed as far as possible during the process of *shravana* as well. It is the *manana* which strengthens and invigorates the process of *shravana*. In short, it is the very life and essence of *shravana* itself.

The next process is *nidhidhyasana* where the mind is trained to dwell concentratedly upon the result or the conclusion to which the process of *shravana* and *manana* has led the ultimate principle of Absolute Consciousness. Once you succeed in catching a glimpse of this principle of Absolute Consciousness, you have to keep it before your mind's eye in order to realize the principle of *sakshatkara*. Having realized this once, it would be impossible for you to be thrown into delusion as you have been at present. You will then realize the world of beings in the self and therefore, in Me which is one with the self (4:35).

Even if you have been the most sinful of all sinners, you should never be afraid of that. You shall be able to cross over all evils by means of the boat of wisdom or knowledge (4:36).

Just as the burning fire reduces heaps of fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge burns up all actions and reduces them to ashes (4:37).

There is nothing in the whole world as sacred and holy as knowledge. It is said to be *pavitra* because it protects us from the series of births and deaths which is spoken of as *pavi* or *vajra*. Real knowledge cannot come from outside. It is an unfoldment or development from within. It is the practice of *yoga*, *karma yoga*, unification with all beings in active work for their good; *bhakti yoga*, unification with all in the feeling of divine and universal love for all beings; and *jnana yoga*, or realization that it is really oneself that stands behind the entire universe which is made up of innumerable

beings. These three yogas are all interlinked together and mutually help each other in the attainment of the common end of all. The culture and the development of the powers of the individual self are meant to make the individual more and more fit for the service and love of all in karma and bhakti yogas. Jnana yoga is realized to a certain extent in the beginning, but as karma yoga and bhakti yoga gradually develop within us until they reach the stage of perfection in due course of time, the real jnana or knowledge dawns upon us itself in the inmost recesses of our self as the ultimate fruition of our efforts in the direction of karma, bhakti and jnana yogas.

The important point to be marked here is that real jnana is to be attained only as a result of our inward culture and discipline through yogic practices. We have to bear in mind that jnana yoga is a process, a training, an intellectual training for the attainment of knowledge; just as bhakti yoga is a training of affections and emotions by making them full of universal love and benevolence; and just as karma yoga is training of the will for active service of all beings in trying to help them attain the supreme good – each is different from jnana or realized knowledge, spoken of here as the holiest and most sacred of all, and as having the effect of burning up all the impurities of actions and karmas.

The conditions for the attainment of knowledge are:

1. *Shraddha*, faith or confidence in the fact that jnana will be attained, that jnana is capable of being attained.
2. Earnestness
3. Restraint of the senses.

These conditions being present, there can be no obstacle to the attainment of jnana. It is sure to be attained and it is sure to lead shortly to ineffable peace and glory. Those who keep themselves ignorant have no faith in the possibility and capability of knowledge being attained. Those who are sceptical in this respect have to perish, for they will not put forth their best energies and efforts towards the attainment of this highest of all perfections. And alas, these people

will neither have happiness in this world nor in the next. No peace is possible to a soul full of doubts in this respect. Therefore, it is not safe to allow oneself to remain in a condition of doubts. As soon as doubts overwhelm the mind, they should be removed by discussion, *pariprashna*, *pranipat* and *seva*, as pointed out in Chapter 4, sloka 34.

He who has destroyed the doubts by means of *jnana* or knowledge, and who has overcome the binding tendency of *karmas* by the practice of *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti yoga*, and who has thus made his way to and fixed himself in the Inmost Self or the *atma*, cannot be bound or fettered by the effects of actions, *karma*.

Therefore, O Arjuna! Take up the sword of knowledge and cut asunder the doubts that have arisen in your heart on account of ignorance. (Here *jnana* stands for the intellectual processes and reasoning that remove the doubts in respect of the attainability of Infinite Consciousness. It is not to be confounded with the highest realization of the ultimate conclusion of the *jnanic* process which was spoken of as *jnana* in Chapter 4, sloka 38.) Gird up your loins for the practice of *yoga* and do stand up for that sake, O Arjuna!

DISCOURSE 4

Chapter 5: The Yoga of Renunciation of Action

Lord Sri Krishna, at the end of Chapter 4, had spoken with some emphasis of the excellence of knowledge, *jnana*, and in the last sloka had exhorted Arjuna to destroy all doubts by the sword of *jnana*, knowledge or wisdom. The path of wisdom or knowledge, as advocated by the school of Samkhya, required that all sorts of activities should be given up. The entire energy that we possess was to be devoted to the acquisition of the knowledge by which the whole world process is revealed and the ultimate, underlying principle of the Absolute Purusha is attained.

There was another school of yoga which pointed out that the greater portion of humanity was incapable of becoming entirely intellectual. Even the attainment of the highest principles of *jnana* required the purification of the lower nature of man for which purpose the method of yoga was necessary. This school did not require giving up of all activities, but it enjoined that because the will is also an essential element of our nature, it must be gradually made to give up its individual character and assume the nature of the Universal will. It generally acts for the good of the individual, the self. It must be made to embrace more and more within itself, the field of the Universal, by working for the good of others.

Lord Sri Krishna combined these two different schools of thought into one by exhorting Arjuna to stand up to fight, to take up the sword of knowledge or wisdom for the destruction of ignorance and doubts, and to live up to the principles of yoga or work for the good of all for the support of righteousness, for the destruction of oppression and tyranny and for the sake of justice, universal love and benevolence. This created doubts in the mind of Arjuna, for he thought them to be different schools, opposed to each other. Therefore, he puts the question to the Lord that He had praised the school of Samkhya by extolling sannyasa and had praised yoga by calling upon him to fight for the sake of justice and righteousness, so he wanted Him to select for him the best of the two that he might be certain in his convictions, settled and determined in his attitude, and firmly follow the best of the two.

The Lord replies, that both of these, sannyasa yoga and karma yoga, lead to the ultimate goal, *nihsreyaskaravubhau*, but of these two, karma yoga is the more suitable for you and for the general humanity. What is necessary is that the essence of sannyasa yoga has to be acquired. That essence lies in raising yourself gradually above hatred and desire, above attraction and repulsion, above pain and pleasure, in short, above the pairs of opposites. In this way, the *nirdwandwa* condition of mind, equanimity, and the release from bondage of limitations are easily obtained.

The man who tries to follow the principles of karma yoga by acting up to the dictates of universal love and benevolence, by making himself the servant of all humanity for the sake of the rule of righteousness gets, in the course of time, rid of the principle of desire and hatred with respect to individuals. The one thing necessary to be borne in mind by him is that he should, in all his activities, be actuated only by a strong sense of duty, *swadharma*, universal love and benevolence. He should work only for the sake of work, for the sake of his inward spiritual development, purification and perfection and not for any ulterior, selfish gain, reward

or profit. Such a line of action has the effect of purifying the lower nature of man, cleansing it of the baser passions and desires and gradually uplifting it into the serene atmosphere of a spiritual calm and repose, of inward bliss. Then it becomes possible to ascend the heights of spiritual knowledge and attain absolute unity with the Absolute Reality.

Without the help of karma yoga the attainment of Samkhya yoga is rather difficult for the lower nature, being full of rajas and tamas, clamours for satisfaction. If forcibly kept aloof from all activity, it sets up certain forces at work within human nature, which work underground for some time, then burst forth into a severe explosion, and drag the man who has not conquered the lower nature, into the deepest and direst maya of sensuality and worldliness. There may be few who are fit to follow the path of Samkhya or knowledge alone without the help of karma yoga. For the vast majority, maybe almost for the entire humanity, karma yoga has to be taken as the handmaid of Samkhya or jnana yoga. With the help of conquering the principle of lower activity, the lower or selfish rajas, by the principle of higher activity – the principle of universal love instead of selfish love; the principle of universal good, instead of selfish good – the Absolute Brahma, the ultimate object of both the systems, is easily and shortly attained.

The system of Samkhya and the system of yoga appear different only to the child, to the ignorant. As a matter of fact, he who follows either of the two completely obtains the ultimate object of both which is one and the same. What is attained by Samkhya is also attained by yoga. He only truly sees and understands, who perceives the unity of Samkhya and yoga. The real object of yoga is to make man attain inward spiritual perfection, to make him self-controlled, and to make him bring his senses under complete restraint. These things have to be brought about mainly by feeling for all and by working for all.

The real mystery is that you cannot expand your inward self, the presently limited and individual self, into the

universal as long as you regard it limited in your body alone, and you cannot help regarding it like that as long as you work for yourself alone. Work has got a peculiar influence in that it unites you to him for whom you work and makes you feel your unity with him. Thus, if you work for the sake of all humanity, for the sake of God, for the sake of righteousness by means of the influence of work, you will gradually feel your unity with all humanity, nay, through the Universal Lord, with all creation. By the mysterious influence of good work, or karma yoga, you will begin to feel yourself as one with the self of all beings, *sarvabhootatmabhootatma*, feeling which you will be one with the Universal Self and thus rise to the serene and pure region of Brahma, spirituality, whence all fetters of karma fall off and all activities, being for the universal, cease to individualize you and to produce any fetters for your bondage.

It is impossible for the actions and karma of such a man to create bondage for him. Having expanded his individual self into the Universal Self, through the mysterious influence of work for the good of all, has had the effect of making his interest the interest of all. He ceases to identify himself as one with the activities of his own personality. He feels within himself that it is not he as the real self who sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, walks, sleeps, breathes, talks, leaves, takes, opens the eye or shuts it.

Rather he realizes all along that this entire universe is a big machinery behind which stands his own self as the enlivening principle of the entire mechanism. This universe has various and innumerable centres of activity with different organizations as individualized sensual organisms. The senses that constitute these organisms act, and are acted upon, by the various objects they come into relation with. His self, as the life of all these organisms, has the same relation with all. The tie that seemed to limit this self to one such organism or body was not a real and permanent tie. It was a tie that had come into being in the course of evolution on account of the principle of *ahamkara*, or I-ness, which is an ever expanding and ever developing principle. In its

course of evolution it took up some organism as its own, but gradually, under the influence of wisdom, *jnana*, and universal love, *bhakti*, it has come to look upon all organisms as its own. Thus, the particular tie with the individual organisms falls off and the sense comes to it, in its full force, that the particular activities of individual organisms are not its own or rather, are its own in the same sense as the activities of all other organisms are its own.

Thus he who realizes, that all his activities really lie in the Absolute Self, Brahma, can have no attachment to the consequences of those activities. Of course, in his activities he cannot but act for the immediate good of some particular portions of the universe, the manifestations of that Brahma. He would always link his activities, even if it was for the good of some particular individuality, even his own, to the cause and service of the entire universal organism. He serves himself, his limited personality, not as a separate, independent entity, but as a part and for the good of all. In the same way, he serves his nation, his country, not for its own separate good but for the good of the entire human race. Acting from this standpoint of universal good, he can never look to anything outside the activity as having any ulterior motive or object for it. He cannot link the activity with any kind of reward, consequence or benefit to his own so-called personal self. Acting without attachment to personal ends, he is not tainted with the effects of his actions: the sinfulness in them, the tendency in them to make him bound down to his own individuality. He remains as free from them, as uninfluenced by them, as a lotus leaf immersed in water remains free from the effect of water.

The question might crop up again as to why at all, if the poisonous influence of actions is to be avoided, the actions themselves should not be given up? The answer is, there is no poison in the actions. The poison lies in the motive, with the purpose for or the object with which the action is undertaken. It lies in the standpoint from which you enter into your activity. Activity as such cannot and

should not be given up. Activity is as much inherent in the Brahma or Absolute Self as knowledge, consciousness or self-consciousness. Even consciousness itself is an activity, and thus it is impossible to reduce the self into an absolutely inactive condition.

When the activity bases itself upon the wrong standpoint of being for our own good in conflict with the good of all, as being separate from and independent of all, as being capable of realizing our own good apart from the good of all, then our actions become poisonous and sinful. It has to be well borne in mind that all selfish action, whether virtuous or vicious, and action undertaken even for the attainment of swarga, is a sin from the standpoint of one who aspires to attain universal and infinite consciousness. Even the swargic consciousness is an individual consciousness and is thus a miserable state of existence in comparison with the infinite bliss of Absolute Consciousness.

The attainment of the Infinite consciousness is always obstructed by the individualizing effect of karma or action and therefore, to all aspirants after absolute freedom karma has been a bugbear. We find all the different schools of Indian thought trying to solve the problem of karma without any great success. Afraid of the effects of karma, they advocated the absolute giving up of all karma which was an impossibility. The *Gita* teaches that it is not the karma or activity which binds and produces misery, but it is the desire, the selfish desire for the consequences thereof for our own selves and the attachment thereto, which has to be given up. The Lord emphasizes the fact that karma without *sangha* is not only not poisonous but essentially necessary to help us in our efforts to attain absolute freedom or Infinite Consciousness. Therefore, what is to be given up is not activity in itself, but activity which is prompted by selfish desires. What is to be adopted is activity for the service of all, for the purification of our lower nature, so that the Universal Self may be attained, always remembering that, in order to attain the universal, we must link our personal self to the universal. If we do ostensibly any

good for our personal self, it must always be for the service of the good and interests of all, the universal.

The physical body, the mind, the reason and the senses, all have to be placed at the service of the universal. It has to be well realized that all these, being essential organic parts of the universal manifestation, can have their true life only by their living for and serving the ends of the universal. It will not do to let them remain inactive for selfish ends, not allow them to realize the purpose for which they have come into being, not allow them to work out their evolution by letting them develop and unfold their latent divine powers, by means of healthy activity. It will be necessary to offer them in loving service at the altar of the universal so that by healthy, virtuous, loving and altruistic activity, they may gradually lift the yogi out of the misery of individual and limited consciousness into the bliss of universal and unlimited consciousness.

Therefore, you have to give up not karma but karmaphal, and always be inwardly realizing your oneness and unity with the Self of all beings. This will bring about eternal peace.

Beware of desire, the desire for self, the desire for pleasures, even the desire to love, to enjoy for desire will link you to the fruits of your actions and bring about limitation and bondage. Forget not that real bliss does not lie in anything external, but in the condition of consciousness you may be in. All limitations, all conditions in which consciousness feels itself limited and bound, are woefully miserable. Even the pleasures of the world please you only by freeing your consciousness of a large number of limitations for the time being, though they sow the seeds of still fresh limitations in future. Real bliss can only be attained by gradually freeing consciousness of the element of selfish desire, which is at the root of limitations and miserable conditions of existence. Kill this desire gradually by habitual activity for the ends of the universal, the cause of righteousness and the good of all and the eternal peace of Infinite Consciousness will be all your own.

The renunciation of all karma is not to be an external renunciation. It is an internal and mental, *manas*, renunciation, *sannyasa*, of all actions or karmas, and upon attaining, you remain in bliss with all your lower nature and all your senses well regulated and restrained, *bashi*. Dwelling serenely in this body, the universal body, having nine gates, the nine principles that evolve first out of the self-consciousness – the ‘I-am-Myself’ of the Absolute Consciousness – you remain in complete rest and peace, neither doing anything yourself, nor causing anything to be done, always realizing that your eternal self is ever free in its nature, is ever living in itself, in its own consciousness of itself. It neither creates any agency or conception of agency, nor does it create actions, nor does it link the actions to their consequences. It being consciousness itself, it cannot but assert itself, its existence to itself, *swabhava*. This *swabhava* or inherent and natural self-assertion, is going on eternally, *pravartate*, and therefore, in due course all these various ideas, as traced in the ‘Philosophy of Evolution’ in the appendix, arise and become the source of misery to all beings.

Thus, as a matter of fact, the eternal self, the all-pervading self, *vibhuh*, remains ever untainted and free. He neither takes up the evil-doing nor the well-doing of anyone, neither the sins nor the virtues of the individual. In the course of evolution, as the several principles come into being, all these principles of buddhi, chit, manas and ahamkara, constituting together the antahkarana, have in themselves the reflection of the Universal Consciousness or the Eternal Self. This reflected consciousness, with the antahkarana as its vehicle, becomes a jantu or jiva, because in a sense it is born and comes into being. Further on, the principles of time and space envelop this jiva into their own shadow of darkness, and the limitation of antahkarana becomes still grosser, darker and thicker by the limitations of time and space. The limitations go on increasing the jiva, through the influence of these limitations, for the time being, ignorantly subject to the delusion of being really bound and limited.

Its attention is naturally turned, in the first instance, towards external limitations and it labours under the misunderstanding that the limitations cast upon it are real and true. It does not realize that, being an emanation of the Eternal and Infinite Self, or rather being the Infinite Self itself, it has the seeds of infinite perfection within itself. This knowledge becomes covered up for the time being, by ignorance which is due to the externalizing tendencies of the principles of antahkarana and the other principles, of time and space, etc., which have borrowed their externalizing or objectifying tendency from the objective self-assertion of the Infinite Consciousness. As the objective self-assertion is necessarily followed by the subjective self-identification in the complete circle of self-consciousness of the Absolute, so the *ajnana*, ignorance, is necessarily followed by *jnana*, knowledge. When the principle of knowledge asserts itself it destroys all darkness and ignorance and illumines the Absolute Self, shining in its full effulgence like the ever-luminous sun in the sky.

This knowledge of the Absolute Self has to be acquired, mastered and reduced to realization by a life entirely devoted to the purpose. The entire energy of the intellect has to be directed towards its acquisition. The whole soul has to be thrown into its realization, *tadatmanah*. The entire being of ours is to be kept fixed, immovably fixed in the same direction, *tannishthah*. Our whole existence is to be made dependent on it as its sole aim and goal, *tatparayanah*. Only then can *jnana* be enabled to wash off the impurities engendered by ignorance in the shape of selfish desires and carnal passions. Only then can that condition of consciousness or rather conditionless, limitless consciousness be attained, whence there is no return to the miseries of limited and finite existence.

It has to be well impressed upon us that the acquisition of *jnana* cannot be attained by unsustained fitful efforts made at convenient intervals in our life. If we are in earnest about it, we ought to order the whole life in a way to make

it fit to realize the object in view. All our daily duties must be performed only with a view to fit us for the acquisition of jnana. In our every day conduct of life, we must always be careful to see how we weed out the roots of selfishness. In all our actions, we must always try to give predominance to intellectual and spiritual pursuits. We must direct all our energies towards the practice of karma, bhakti and jnana yogas until we reach the point of realization, the state of consciousness which would make us feel the same towards all beings, to look upon all beings as our own selves, to love all without any distinction, to have the same feeling of oneness for the highly educated and cultured Brahmin as well as for the lowest outcaste or chandal, to have the same feeling for the dog as for the elephant and the cow.

We must be able to overlook the external accidents of name and form, the external condition of existence, and penetrate to the eternal essence, the Inmost Self which is one in all beings. This is a difficult task to be accomplished, but the acquisition of true knowledge or jnana makes it possible. Until this point of equal love for all is attained, there can be no hope of absolute liberation. The Absolute Self, the Brahma, is the same, the same everywhere and in all beings and is ever pure. He who fixes his whole being in that Brahma as his Inmost Self must forget differences and attain the condition of consciousness which feels alike for all, *samya*. That is the real test whether true jnana has been acquired or is being acquired. To the degree that you are able to feel alike for all, you have acquired jnana or wisdom.

It is not a question of mere intellectual discussion or conviction. It is not a question of intellectually grasping a proposition, which is other than you and which is not concerned with your being. This knowledge of Brahma is the knowledge and realization of your own self, and thus, is mainly concerned with your own being, and must act upon the becoming of your being. It cannot but change the condition of your existence, your consciousness, your inner being. In short, your feelings, your will and your reason

must cease to be individual and personal, and instead must put on the character of the Universal and the Absolute. Unless and until this conversion takes place, you ought to understand that you have not acquired true knowledge or jnana. The force that pushes the entire universe down towards objectification, limitation and misery is the force of differentiation, *sargah*. Unless this force is overcome, you will go on becoming more and more limited and miserable. To vanquish it, use all your energies towards the attainment of the feeling of oneness for all. With this weapon of samya you will conquer the enemy of ignorance and differentiation and attain oneness with the Absolute Brahma.

Your attitude towards others must be that of equality. Your attitude towards your own personal self, so far as your own sufferings and enjoyments are concerned, must be that of absolute indifference. You must maintain your inward condition in a state of absolute equilibrium. You should not get elated by your prosperity and should not get depressed by adversity. Realize this well: the knower of *Brahma* is ever fixed immovably in the inherent imperturbable nature of Brahma. He has his reason in his full control and always undisturbed and fixed, *sthira*. He is never subject to the delusion that the external circumstances that go by the name of prosperous or otherwise can have the least effect upon him.

In order to attain this condition the centre of consciousness has to be gradually withdrawn from the external to the internal. The pleasures that arise on account of the contact of the senses with external objects, *vahyasparsha*, have the effect of centralizing the consciousness in the external and withdrawing it from the region, the inward region of the Absolute Self which is pure bliss. The secret of happiness lies there. To the degree you become attached to the contactual pleasures of the senses, you become removed from the real bliss of the *atma*, the Absolute Self. The more you remove yourself from the sensual pleasures, the nearer you approach the pure atmic bliss. It is entirely in your own hands. Either you centralize your consciousness in the external region of

the senses, or fix it in the pure and blissful atma. If you want to fix it on the atma, you will have to withdraw from the frictional sensual pleasures. It is impossible to centralize the consciousness at both these points, the atmic as well as the sensual. For he who makes his choice for the real atmic, bliss spurns away the pleasures of the senses which are miseries in disguise. By leading the life of yoga, he gradually attains oneness with Brahma, the Absolute Self, and lives in eternal peace and bliss, in eternal enjoyment of imperishable bliss.

All the pleasures derived from sensual contact must, by their very nature, be perishable. There can be no real pleasure or happiness in them. Pleasure, in its true sense, is a condition of consciousness where there is no feeling of want, limitation, bondage or obstruction. This much is an essential condition without which there can be no pleasure at all. Ordinary consciousness is always full of the sense of wants and limitations created by the senses, the passions and the desires. The current of consciousness that then flows in us becomes heavy and obstructed with these dirty accumulations of desires, wants and limitations, hence the ordinary feeling of misery when the consciousness is left to feel itself not being engaged in anything. For the time being, the pleasures that arise from the senses are due to this that they centralize the heavy-laden, woeful and miserable current of consciousness on something outside, making it forget temporarily its own present miserable condition. That is why the sensual pleasures are the highest when this self-forgetfulness that they give rise to is at the highest.

This self-forgetfulness is forgetfulness of the pleasant misery-ful, want-ful, desire-ful current of consciousness, in the one sense, or sensation that arises by the friction of the sense with its object. This is a negative way of obtaining pleasure. It is not removing the cause of pain, but trying to forget the pain or to lose the sense of pain in some strong frictional sensation. The cause remains there, the pain and the misery remain there. As soon as the frictional sensation passes, as it must pass very soon, the ordinary condition,

the depressed, anxious, limited and miserable condition of consciousness reasserts itself with still greater force.

The poor deluded soul in ignorance of the real remedy, the real cause of his miserable condition, again rushes to the same pleasure of the sensual contact of friction. It is pitiful that by sacrificing his opportunities of freeing his consciousness from the real seats of pain or miseries, or attaining to the true blissful condition by indulging more and more in the perishable and momentary sensual pleasures, he forgets that all frictional enjoyments of the senses by their repetition are fixing the current of consciousness more and more in the region of the external, the objective, the finite and the limited, thereby increasing the intensity of wants, limitations and desires and strengthening the roots of misery and pain. If he were to realize this, he would look upon the contactual and the frictional pleasures, *samsparshaja bhogah*, as causes or roots of pain and misery, *dukkhayonayah*, and flee from them as he would flee from his enemies. He would realize also that the real pleasure should not be a negative one. It should not have as its condition a consciousness approaching the point of bliss and confused unconsciousness. It should not only suppress temporarily the heavy-laden current of consciousness full of wants and miseries. It should substitute in its place a current of consciousness in which the sense of want has given place to the sense of fullness, the sense of finiteness to the sense of infiniteness, the sense of ignorance to the sense of all knowledge, the sense of dependence to the sense of independence. In order to attain this consciousness, he would necessarily withdraw the current from getting itself mixed with the frictional and contactual sensations towards the centre of the self or atma by restraining himself from external enjoyments, and then in due course attain to the bliss of Infinite Consciousness inherent in his own self.

The ability to endure the excitement of lust, desire, anger and lower passions should be acquired before the critical moment of death arrives. He who succeeds in acquiring this

ability becomes *yukta* or attains self-realization and real bliss. The pleasure or happiness that this self-restraint and self-realizing yogi attains is of a quite different kind from what the men of the world regard as pleasure. The pleasure of this yogi is not in anything without, but it wells up from within his own inherent nature. There seems to be infinite peace spreading everywhere within him accompanied by inward illumination, revelation and knowledge. These are the conditions that appear of themselves before he attains to absolute extinction of the limited personality followed by the fullness of infinite existence, *Brahmanirvanam*. He attains this because the attainment of inward peace following the restraint of lower passions like lust and anger reveals to him that his own inmost self, the blissful self, is that Absolute Brahma itself.

The question may be put as to why, if the Inmost Self is Brahma itself, it does not reveal itself like that. The answer is that, though it is the Brahma itself, it does not see itself as it is but through the spectacle of the conditions of antahkarana, time and space. It is due to the spectacle of time that it seems to become, Brahma, what it really is and has always been. It is due to the spectacle of space that it seems to have particular dimensions whereas in fact it is without any dimensions.

The phenomena of growth and development, for instance, indicate that the thing which is subject to growth and attains to its fullness by becoming grown up, does nothing but realize itself and bring out in manifestation what lay potentially hidden within it. This is a mere appearance. The result of growth and development, the ultimate perfect state which the things seem to attain through a process, is in reality due to our inability, on account of time conception, to grasp the entire thing in one mental grasp. We are compelled by the time idea to take the entire thing piecemeal under the conditions of successive moments of time and therefore, the self-realized thing appears to be attaining and realizing itself. Similarly, what is not in space seems to be expanding in space and becoming infinite in

space. What is thought itself seems to be unfolding itself into ever growing and ever multiplying thoughts.

The difficulty lies in overcoming the limitations due to these conditions or *upadhis* that arise from the Absolute and seem to limit the Absolute in individualized personalities. This has to be mastered by repeatedly trying to understand the origin of things and realizing the fact that there is real oneness as all come out of the one infinite consciousness, *chinna dwadhah*. The realization of this oneness depends upon perfect self-control and perfect love for all beings. Self-control universalizes the will, and love for all universalizes the emotions. The destruction of the ignorance of duality universalizes the reason. Thus, the process of universalization, working in the departments of human nature, destroys all impurities and the yogi or rishi attains to Brahmanirvanam. The most important of all these three is the love of all beings, not merely passive love, but love which manifests itself in active benevolent work for all, *sarvabhootahiteratah*. The emotions being the strongest elements in man, special care must be bestowed upon them. They should be subjected to the process of universalization before any higher development can be expected.

Let none belittle the importance of the restraint of emotions, passions and other elements of the lower nature of man. They make up, so to say, the nine-tenths of real wisdom. He who succeeds in acquiring the power of self-restraint and who thus makes himself fit to acquire the knowledge of self, attains absolute oneness with Brahma without any limitation of time and space. Wherever he may be, in whatever station of life he may find himself, he would always be enjoying the infinite peace and bliss of the eternal Brahma (5:26).

In the next sloka (5:27), Bhagavan Krishna teaches the posture which is suitable for the attainment of the Absolute Brahma. You have to put outside yourself all contactual sensations so that your inward mind may not be distracted by the external sensual agitations. The eyes have to be directed or turned upward to the point in the middle of the eyebrows.

This means that the eyes, which are generally going out on all sides in search of satisfaction through objects, should be turned upward by being withdrawn gradually from the sphere of their activity and concentrated on the middle point where the two eyebrows join, just above the nasal bone. The breath has also to be equalized by being gradually withdrawn from outside merely by the force of will until it ceases to go beyond the nostrils and remains moving within the nostrils. This is the external posture. The internal posture corresponding to it is given in the next sloka (5:28).

The senses, the mind and the reason have to be brought under complete restraint with one purpose and object in view, namely the attainment of absolute freedom, which can never be attained unless desire, fear and anger are destroyed. If they are destroyed, freedom is attained. The path is weary and long. The giddy heights to be attained seem to throw people into confusion or despair.

One thing has to be borne in mind which will cheer you up in all your efforts and keep you fearless and bold in the heroic battle of freedom: the real receiver of all yajnas and tapas, worship and austerity, the Lord, the great of all the worlds, is within you, in your own self, as its own inmost essence, as your eternal friend. This is Myself, my own divine being, which loves all beings as their best friend and master. Realize this fact fully and bear in mind that, in spite of innumerable difficulties and obstacles, the Inmost Self of man, which is one with My eternal essence, is bound to assert itself and, when it does so, it is backed by Me, the Eternal Lover of all beings. In this realization lies his eternal peace and infinite strength, and it is through this that the real aim is attained. Thus, there is no cause for despair.

If you were not infinite in yourself, the attainment of perfection would not have been possible, and nobody can be supposed to try for the impossible. The fact that I am within you ought to give you the assurance of the possibility of perfection, and with this assurance, firmly fixed in yourself, arise and work out your salvation (5:27-29).

DISCOURSE 5

Chapter 6: The Yoga of Meditation

Chapter 6 commences with the reaffirmation of the principle of karma yoga that we must be always active out of love for all, without caring for the consequences and without the least attachment to the fruits thereof. In short, the man who devotes himself unselfishly to the work of public good, to selfless activities for the sake of the entire humanity – or as it is impracticable to directly serve the entire humanity effectively, one who takes up portions of his country, his community or nation – as an object of devotion and service and serves it with absolute devotion and zeal, is according to Sri Krishna, a true sannyasin and a yogi, and not the one who has given up the fire and given up all action.

It was a custom for the formal sannyasin and it is still so, to give up the performance of homa, which is a symbol of all religious ceremonies, and to renounce all connections with the world. Arjuna was under the impression that in order to be a sannyasi one has to give up the world, as the other sannyasis used to do in his time. Therefore, it was difficult for him to understand why the Lord enjoined him to fight out the battle that lay before him. Hence, it was necessary to point out to him what the essence of sannyasa and yoga was apart from the formalities and ceremonies.

The performance of all religious ceremonies, symbolized by the fire of agnihotra, was for the sake of gaining swarga through the favour of gods. That was the first idea of pravritti marga. As spiritual consciousness deepened gradually, it appeared that swarga, which was also only a means of sensual enjoyment, could not satisfy the inmost spiritual craving for fullness and infinite peace. With the dawn of this consciousness, the karma-kanda became insipid and the nation gradually evolved the higher philosophy of the Upanishads, emphasizing the fact that nothing outside us can give us full satisfaction. The real abode of peace and bliss is within us, our own Inmost Self. This consciousness could not arise until the life, that is free from the enjoyments of the world and devoted entirely to the culture of the inner spiritual powers, was lived. This was done during the period of the arankas. In the course of time, it was clearly perceived that in order to be happy it was not necessary for man to have any external possessions. What was essential was inward culture and discipline.

The life of a sannyasin or a recluse helped to a certain extent the course of inward culture by knowledge or *jnana*. Then it was perceived that, as the recluse lived for himself alone, he was unconsciously developing and strengthening the principle of individuality or *ahamkara* in him, which rendered him unfit for the complete and perfect realization of inward peace and bliss. This perception of the shortcoming of the life of sannyasa lies at the root of the philosophy of karma yoga. The principle of individuality, or *ahamkara*, which leads to the life for oneself alone without caring for others, and which thus gives rise to selfish activities, has to be vanquished before any real and true spiritual progress can be accomplished. Therefore, in place of life for oneself, life for all has to be substituted.

In this life for all, there must be some motive power, for without it there can be no energy and there would be the danger of desiring something in return for ourselves. In the absence of any other higher motive, the motive for self

is sure to assert itself. It is in order to keep this principle of self-love under due restraint and complete subjection that the principle of universal love or benevolence has to be awakened by gradual practice of selfless activities for the good of the country or humanity at large. There is already a rudimentary principle of benevolence in us based upon the fact that all beings are really one in the Absolute Self, and therefore love for the Absolute Self or *Paramatman* necessarily means love for all beings. When an activity is undertaken as promoted by this love there would naturally be no desire for any recompense or reward, for the realization of that love is its own reward. Activity without love, therefore, or without bhakti yoga, cannot be much effective towards leading us to the goal. The question remains as to how this principle of universal love which we awaken in ourselves is to be made effective.

It seems to be impossible or impracticable to serve the entire world of beings in general, or even the entire world of humanity. It is necessary for this purpose to have some organization so that each individual may have his place assigned in the organization with a view to advance and serve the interest of all. Then it would be possible for him, by discharging the duties of his situation, with universal love, regardless of consequences, fearlessly and boldly, to consecrate his life to the service of all. This assignment of a particular position to each individual would be in accordance with his fitness and in accordance with the circumstances, the environment and the necessities of the time.

The entire world of humanity has thus to organize itself as one international community, having as its various organs the different countries and the different nationalities, each developing itself after its own special character and trying to serve the interest of the whole international community by laying at the altar of common good its best achievements and accomplishments. Each nation or country in its turn has to organize itself into a society with all its members arranged in various orders, according to their fitness, so that they

all, acting in and discharging their various functions, may make the life of the entire nation strong and effective for the purpose of the common good. Thus, each member of society has only to look to what his duty is in accordance with his own fitness, powers and capacities for the advancement of the interest of the nation or society he is a member of. And he has to consecrate his entire self to the discharge of the duty. This common good is the realization of the highest and the noblest, the realization of the divine perfection that lies latent in all humanity. It is for this realization that the entire humanity has to be organized. An important principle of this realization is that it is to be a development from within and, therefore, the organization is to be on such a plan that all external temptations to obstruct this development should be removed. At the same time, all external restraints preventing the full unfoldment of the divine principle should be done away with.

Thus, the members of the organization should be left free to develop themselves to the utmost, or rather should be aided in their efforts towards that. At the same time, they should be restrained from falling into the temptations that excite their lower passions, their carnal propensities and degrade them to the level of brutes. Therefore, it is possible, until the goal has been reached, for circumstances to arise when it is necessary to oppose and suppress the forces that tend to curtail the freedom of societies or natures towards working out their own destinies and to oppose the forces that help the temptations, which drag us down into the mire of sensualities and carnalities.

Whenever such an occasion arises the opposing forces are represented by a party headed by some leader, and so it was that this party of unrighteousness during the time of Sri Krishna was headed by Duryodhana. The fight with Duryodhana was to be undertaken by Arjuna for the sake of the entire organization of humanity in order to free his country from the burden of opposing forces of evil, so that his country might be able freely to achieve the highest it was

capable of and contribute its share towards the progress and development of humanity as a whole. His duty, the line of his duty in accordance with the fitness and the need of the hour, was clear to him and he was asked to consecrate his life in full realization of the essential unity of all beings by jnana yoga, and without any desire for reward or recompense by karma yoga with the principle of universal love as the only motive power working within him.

This is the yoga that Sri Krishna speaks of in sloka 2 and He, with his usual emphasis, puts it that what is said to be sannyasa you have to realize as yoga. For yoga means action, true and real action – action for all as being one with all and so full of love for the all. The *sankalpa*, or willing for one's own good, as apart or separate from the entire organization, has to be renounced, for without giving up this *sankalpa*, no one can be a yogi. Yoga is the most important and most essential for the attainment of absolute reality and, therefore, it is that the Lord here has emphasized the fact that Arjuna has to be a yogi before trying to attain anything else (slokas 1 and 2).

For one aspiring to ascend the heights of yoga, *karma* or action with love as its basis, is the means. When he attains the goal, *shama*, or inward peace, *shanti*, keeps him up in the position he has reached. Therefore, it is essential for an aspirant of yoga to undertake and to devote himself to benevolent activities in accordance with his own powers and capacities and the position he occupies in the social organization of his country or the world at large. Beginning with this, he has to gradually ascend step by step, and when he reaches the highest point he would find that it has become impossible for the objects of senses to attract him or for the actions to bind him down. He would find that *sankalpa* or the will for the self has fallen off (slokas 3 and 4).

This attainment, this glorious achievement, cannot be accomplished through the help of anyone other than yourself. Self-help is the only means for this attainment. Do not be weak. Do not depend upon anything external to yourself. Hope not to be saved by the favour of gods. It is

impossible for others, gods or men, to work out the steps of evolution necessary for your salvation. It cannot be too much emphasized that it is development from within and not from without. Your own inmost self is higher, stronger, more powerful than the whole world of gods and men put together.

As it is self-conscious it necessarily, though only in form, dualizes itself: as the subjective and the objective, the higher and the lower, the universal and the particular, the infinite and the finite, the Absolute and the relative. In spite of this dualization, this 'othering' of itself by itself, always remains essentially one in itself. It is only its attending towards the objective that makes it appear as limited and individualized, subject to external influences of passions, desires, etc. Its turning back to itself, to the subjectivity and the universality within itself, makes it realize what is the infinite and the absolute.

Look, therefore, within and not without for the saving grace, which the ignorant are in search of from others external to themselves. It lies entirely in your hands. Do not drag yourself down into the mire of sensuality and woeful miseries. Do not give way to despair. Save yourself by your own self. Never forget that your own inmost self is your greatest friend and saviour, *bandhu*, if it is subjectified, having brought the senses under its perfect control. This very self of yours is your deadly enemy if it is inclined towards the objective and is being controlled by the senses. Thus your only friend is the self. Your only foe is the self. You can make it your friend or foe. Do as you please. If you put yourself on the right path, give up indolence and inactivity. If you restrain your lower nature, you will find that the divinity, which is latent in you, will begin to gradually unfold itself and your condition of consciousness will not be subject to the feeling that arises from being respected or disgraced. It will not be subject to the pleasures and pains arising from sensual objects (slokas 5-7).

You will attain to the height of consciousness where knowledge of the world process, *jnana*, and realization of the eternal reality underlying the process, *vijnana*, would

flow into you in an unceasing current, giving you full satisfaction in your inmost self. You would be able to laugh at the pleasures of the senses that seemed to be so attractive before. To you, a clod of earth, a piece of stone or a piece of gold would all appear the same. To you, an acquaintance, a friend, an enemy, a virtuous man and a sinner, would all excite the same feelings – the same feeling of equal love for all. Your inward consciousness will ever remain imperturbable and undisturbed, ever enjoying the sweet satisfaction of inward self-realization (slokas 8 and 9).

To help you in this course you have to practise daily the control of the mind, the process of meditation, which may reveal to you the knowledge of the world process. Just as *karma yoga*, actions of love for its own sake, is necessary to weaken the principle of finiteness, individuality or *ahamkara*, so the practice of *dhyana yoga* is necessary to withdraw the current of consciousness from outside, to give it a subjective turn and to enable it to attain self-realization. For this purpose you should daily retire into solitude for the practice of *dhyana* or meditation, where you should evacuate your mind of all desires, free it from all sorts of grasping at the objects and there in calmness try to meditate upon yourself, keeping your mind in perfect control.

The place of retirement should be pure and holy, free from all sorts of disturbances. Your posture must be as fixed and immovable as possible; your seat should be neither too high nor too low. Spread over with cloth, deer skin or kusha grass, seated there with your body, neck and head quite erect and straight, kept in as fixed a position as possible, with your sight fixed on the tip of the nose or the space in front, without looking to the space all around. You should meditate there fearlessly, following the rules of *brahmacharya*, keeping your passions under your control, with your mind perfectly restrained and regulated, fixed in ‘The-Me’ and resting completely on ‘The-Me’. The important conditions for *dhyana yoga* laid down here are fearlessness, *brahmacharya* and control of the mind.

Fearlessness means that the devotee, who has entered upon the course of yoga through the practice of karma yoga, ought not be afraid of anything, even of his life, in the performance of his actions of love for their own sake. When he practises dhyana, he should have full faith in himself, full confidence in his inherent fullness and the infiniteness, and full assurance that he is bound to realize the innate possibilities of his nature. There should not be the least suspicion or doubt of the fact that he, as in inmost nature which, though lying potential or latent at present, is infinite and omnipotent. The principles for brahmacharya are important for this reason that the practice of dhyana makes large demands upon the energies of the nervous system. Therefore, he must have a large reserve fund of nervous energy, which can be accumulated only by the practice of brahmacharya, to be used up in the highly concentrated, intellectual processes of dhyana yoga. He ought never to lead a life of indulgence of sexual pleasures. His life must be a life of regulated brahmacharya, and in case he is a householder, he must reduce his sexual connections in accordance with the shastric rules to what is necessary for the sake of reproduction.

Without strict control of the passion of lust, it is impossible for the higher possibilities of our nature to awaken and develop into their full manifestation. It is through lust that the energies of our nature, the current of consciousness, is being carried downwards, is being externalized into objective individualization, finiteness, limitation, miserableness and woefulness. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary, in order to realize the infinite and the absolute, to bring this passion under restraint and to put a stop to the downward-flowing current of conscious energy. That is the rule, and accordingly, the more he can keep himself without the indulgence of lust, the more he becomes fit for the higher processes of dhyana yoga. Lustful indulgence, therefore, has absolutely to be given up. He may for the love of all as a matter of duty in his ashrama of grihastha have connections at stated times, out of love for the sake of progeny only.

The control of mind has to be commenced gradually from the outside. The senses have to be gradually withdrawn from their connection with the objective world. For instance, the sight which is running after external objects has to gradually limit its sphere to the space lying in front of the nose, without looking to the various quarters or spaces around. Then it has to be gradually, very slowly brought back to the space in front of the tip of the nose, and gradually to the tip of the nose itself. It should be borne in mind that this process of withdrawal or *pratyahara*, as it is technically called, is to be very gradual so that the muscles concerned in the action might become used to it, otherwise the process may appear to be painful, causing mental disturbance. When this is accomplished, the sight is withdrawn at least to the space immediately in front of the nose and you have ceased to see the surrounding spaces. You have to think within yourself as to 'Who is this who is?' thus gathering together the forces of its consciousness.

You will gradually find that there is within you something which appears to expand itself and to contract itself at its own will and is of the nature of consciousness. The process of withdrawal of the senses that you have just performed leads to the withdrawal of the mind from all thoughts, except that which is withdrawing it and gradually evacuating it of its contents. Before this you never consciously exerted your will upon the mind and the senses to draw them away from their surroundings. Now you have commenced to do this by your own inward force, call it will or *buddhi*, whatever you like. It is the force which can draw away and does draw away the entire expansion of yourself in the objective world to some centre of infinity that lies within. This force is Krishna or is of Krishna. As you are gradually withdrawing, you are to think upon this Krishna force and gradually carry yourself through the various stages of dhyana to the ultimate centre, Sri Krishna Himself – the Infinite and the Absolute, 'The-Me' lying within you (slokas 10–14).

The yogin thus, with his mind completely controlled and fixed always, unceasingly gathering together and

withdrawing the currents of his consciousness, brings them back to the ultimate centre of the 'The-Me' and attains the eternal peace of nirvana.

One who wants to succeed on the path of yoga must be a man of moderate habits. He should neither take too much, neither sleep too much, nor remain always sleepless. His diet, his activities and his sleep should be all well regulated in order that the pain-destroying yoga may be attained (slokas 16 and 17).

One who lives a life of moderation and practises moderation in the way pointed out above, gradually succeeds in attaining yoga. His mind, becoming well regulated, restrained and controlled, comes to be fixed in the Inmost Self, the *atman*. When he attains this condition, he becomes absolutely desireless and then it is said that he can be said to have attained yoga (sloka 18).

Just as the wick of the lamp in a place where there is no wind does not flicker but stands erect and unmoved, so the mind, *chitta*, of the yogin, who has conquered the desires, restrained the passions and is engaged in the practice of yoga, stands firm and unmoved. When the mind, by the practice of yoga, becomes fixed and unmoved, the yogin perceives his self by his self and becomes self-satisfied. The mind is the lower manifestation of the atman, or self in its objective side. As long as it remains engaged in the objects that lie outside, the consciousness of the self – its inherent light of intelligence, which has manifested as the mind and which enables the self to be self-conscious – being externalized, does not and cannot reveal the self and make it really self-conscious. Thus it happens that ordinarily self-consciousness remains at its lowest point; the objective consciousness, which makes us finite, predominates. When the mind attains fixity and immovableness, *uprain*, being checked and restrained from going out towards the objects, the entire current of consciousness flows back and concentrates itself upon the self, which results in self-illumination, self-revelation, self-consciousness and perfect self-satisfaction.

The process is quite simple. The consciousness in you, if directed towards the objects must make you finite and limited for the time being. If restrained and brought back to the centre of the Self, it must reveal it as the infinite and the absolute, full of excessive bliss.

This bliss, which appears after self-illumination and self-consciousness, cannot be accessible to the senses. It can only be grasped by reason, and once it is felt and perceived, nothing in the world can have the least attraction for the yogin, who has attained self-perfection.

There can be no higher achievement for him than this self-realized consciousness. He cannot be moved from there by the severest pain, the most woeful miseries. The reason is that the pains and miseries connect themselves with you through the mind by the objectification of your consciousness that the mind is always doing, as it makes you finite, full of wants and desires, hence miserable. This medium of connection between misery and the self – the mind, or objectifying consciousness – being changed and becoming subjectified, ceases to act as the medium through which miseries could be manufactured. Therefore, the connecting link being broken, *duhkhasyaviyogah*, or the seed of miseries having been burnt up, it is impossible for him to be moved by any pain or miseries. The yoga as leading to this accomplishment should be sought after and practised by you.

You have to drive out all the desires that arise from the ideation that you are an individual, a finite individual, and an embodied individual, belonging to a particular species and a particular sex. *Sankalpa*, the will to live and enjoy as an individual, is the deadliest enemy on the path of self-realization. Vanquish it by supreme effort of your inmost strength and will. Withdraw the senses from their objective surroundings by means of the mind, applying it inversely, as horses are restrained back by holding up the reins. Slowly and gradually catch hold of the mind by *dhiriti*, the strength of your inmost self, by a strong and firm resolution to bring

it back to the subjective centre. Do not let it think about anything else. Doubtless, it would be fleeting about, running about in all directions, but you, your real self, is really above the mind, and so watch and be on guard.

Whenever you perceive the mind going out in any direction, seize it again with all your inner force, and bring it back to the centre of the self. You may find it difficult in the beginning, but do not give way to despair. If you persist and persevere, success is bound to attend your efforts. The highest bliss, which is the result of the tranquillization of the mind, which is pure *Brahma* or Absolute Itself, free from all rajas, or pains and miseries, is bound to be yours. It is in no way difficult of attainment. The only necessary condition is persistence, perseverance, continuity and regularity.

The mind having been habituated from long ages to be objectified does not yield to the efforts of reason or *buddhi* to make it subjective and to merge it in the Infinite. Wrong habit in one direction can only be conquered by right habit in the other direction, and no habit can be formed except by continual or incessant repetition or practice. Thus, if you continually practise the yoga pointed out here, you will with comparative ease attain the highest bliss arising from coming into contact and becoming unified with the Absolute itself. You will then perceive yourself in all beings and all beings in yourself: you will attain the feeling of equal love for all, *samadarshanah*. He who attains this and perceives Me everywhere and all beings in Me is never lost to Me, nor am I ever lost to him. This is the highest point of self-realization to realize how the Self of 'The-Me' being one, absolutely one, is still in all, the life of all.

He who attains this point of yoga understands and realizes the mystery wherever he may happen to be, in whatever condition of life and circumstances. Remember it well Arjuna, he is ever in Me, one with Me. He becomes one in heart with all beings. This is the test of self-realization. He suffers the miseries when others suffer. He becomes happy when others are happy. He has sympathy and love for all. He

is not subject to selfish pains, miseries and desires. He loves all as his own self. This love for all is the test of the highest yoga and it is this love that is accompanied with the highest bliss. So, love all as you love yourself and practise the yoga, as pointed out by Me, if you desire to attain self-realization (slokas 21–32).

Arjuna then puts the question to Sri Krishna that this yoga or mental equilibrium in being free from all desires, and this emotional equilibrium in having equal love for all, *samyena*, appear to be most a difficult attainment as there appear to be restlessness within his inward nature. The *manas* or mind appears to be restless from its very nature and impetuous, strong and inflexible. It seemed as difficult of control as the wind itself (slokas 33 and 34).

Bhagavan replies, No doubt Arjuna, the *manas*, or mind, is restless and hard to curb or restrain, but this nature of *manas* is derived from the objective or externalizing current of the thought activity, or *prakriti*, which brings about the evolution of the objective world. In obedience to that current and as born of that current, *manas* has always been restlessly going out and objectifying itself. By constant repetition in that direction it has acquired a habit of restlessness and impetuosity, but beneath and behind this restlessness there is the perfect calmness of the Absolute Self which gives real life, essential being or ‘be-ness’ to all. The current that has been going out has gradually to be turned back to end itself in self-realization, in attainment of infinite self-consciousness. Towards that end the mind has first to be made to give up its restlessness and impetuosity, and just as it has acquired its present nature of restlessness by constantly and repeatedly acting in obedience to the objectifying current, so it has to be made calm and peaceful by constantly and repeatedly acting in obedience to the subjective current. The will, the inward force of the self that rules and controls, has to be brought into operation by a strong volition, by strong repeated resolutions. In spite of failures, the mind has to be repeatedly kept back from going out towards objects by constant perseverance.

It is for this purpose that apart from the constant and continual practice of restraining the mind and keeping it aloof from objective sensual enjoyments, I have enjoined upon you to regularly practise self-concentration, control of the mind, its evacuation from all objective and sensual thoughts, keeping it absorbed for as long as possible in the thought of the ultimate subject, the Absolute Self, or 'The-Me', the Inmost Being of Me. This practice or *abhyasa*, coupled with the practice or performance of acts of universal love, goes a great way in the due course of time towards changing the restless nature of the mind. Of course, it cannot come to you in a day. You have to work and wait until the final step is taken.

The practice or *abhyasa* has also to be aided by constant meditation upon the worthlessness, or rather the painfulness and miserableness of all worldly enjoyments. The mind runs towards these enjoyments under the impression that they will give it inward satisfaction and peace, but instead of that its restlessness increases. It becomes more and more impetuous. The circumstances and surroundings increase its embarrassments. Its cares and anxieties go on multiplying as it becomes more and more worldly, until it finds itself entangled in the inextricable meshes of miseries and woes. Alas, it finds and discovers then, when it is perhaps too late, the utter emptiness and hollowness of the enjoyments that it had been hankering after. The entire world then appears to be a world of shadows vanishing into the air. The ground upon which it seemed to take its stand seems to be slipping away from underneath his feet. It finds those, whom it regarded as its nearest and dearest, turning away from it, leaving it alone to face the fate that awaits it – the miserable fate of impenetrable darkness, despair, misery and woe.

Far better to be wise from experience than to let yourself drift along a course which may ultimately launch you into inexpressible wretchedness and woefulness! If the life of the senses, the life of selfishness, the life of material enjoyments has not given you perfect self-satisfaction as yet, it is not

wise to hope to attain it by persisting in the same course of life. If all that is perceived by the senses is daily and hourly perishing, it is foolish to imagine to be saved from death by living the life of the senses and remain engrossed in the world perceived by them. Of what avail is it if you enjoy some pleasure for the moment when you perceive that the enjoyer, your own sensual self, the enjoyment and the enjoyed are all mere passing shadows, vanishing appearances having no permanent 'be-ness' in them.

Turn back from this precipitous course, stop awhile and think within yourself: what is that which endures, which gives you being, which is your real being and which really is the source of happiness and satisfaction to you? Think like this and even if you cannot find for the time being the enduring and the subsisting self, peaceful and blissful in its own nature, you can be sure at least of this that the world of the senses is no better than a world of shadowy appearance. This has to be given up even if there is delay in finding out that which endures and subsists.

Even if the enduring and the subsisting be not possible of attainment, why run after that which is known and realized with certainty as perishable, transitory and full of ultimate wretchedness and miserableness? It is wiser rather to be satisfied with negative results, with the absence of pain, producing misery, breeding sensualities and objective enjoyments, than to be daily and hourly digging your own grave and preparing yourself for ultimate pain and woe. Always be thinking and meditating upon the utter hollowness and emptiness of the life of the world and senses. As this thought, *vairagya*, will grow strong in you, the manas, which runs towards the sensual objects regarding them to be the objects of enjoyments, will be repelled from them, regarding them as painful and miserable. Thus the mind or manas will be able to attain the yoga that I have pointed out to you. In short, the manas has to be freed from the idea under which it is working that the sensual pleasures are worthy of attainment, as being capable of giving it self-

satisfaction by vairagya. The manas has to be made to give up its restlessness by constant practice with the help of will, of concentration upon the Self, and evacuation of all sensual and objective ideas by abhyasa. Thus abhyasa and vairagya are the two weapons with which you can attain victory over the restless nature of manas.

The yoga is, I think, impossible of attainment without self-control and self-restraint. Self-control is the essential condition and that is why emphasis is being laid upon abhyasa and vairagya. One who has controlled the senses and lives the life of purity and holiness can attain yoga if he follows the right method. This naturally led to the question which Arjuna asks – the attainment being necessarily a matter of process continued for some length of time, what would happen if the devotee, who is with zeal and earnestness following the life of yoga, fails and happens, on account of weakness, to yield to the lower temptations, and is led away into contrary paths? Would he, being cut off from the life of yoga, having failed to attain the end thereof, perish into non-existence like the cloud that vanishes into nothingness after appearance for a time, as he could not keep himself fixed on the path of Brahma and has foolishly allowed himself to be led astray? This doubt troubles the mind very much, as upon it depends the fact whether one who thinks himself weak to persist in the life of yoga should take himself to it or not. There was some impression in some quarters that the man of the world may hope to be saved in some future time, but the man who takes to yoga, if he falls off and fails can never be saved; utter destruction and ruin can only be his fate.

The reply is that the path is difficult and it is very seldom that without any failures the first attempt proves successful. That is possible only when the force of vairagya or dispassion is very, very strong. Otherwise, there must be some failures now and then, but that should be no cause for despair and discouragement. He who takes to the life of yoga, to the life of self-control, self-concentration and self-realization, to

the life of universal love and universal service, to the life of freedom from sensual enjoyments, to the life of higher and nobler pursuits of the mind and heart, can never perish, can never come to ruin. If you are sincere, earnest and zealous, you must attain the goal, though it may be delayed by your weakness in yielding to temptations in spite of your efforts.

The only undesirable result would be this, that instead of attaining the infinite bliss of self-realization, you will have to go to the lokas of those who lead virtuous lives on earth, to live there for long immemorial years which is comparatively a lower life, a painful life for a yogi. Then after having worked off the effects of individualization that has become accumulated on account of the non-yogic actions, performed under the influence of some temptation, you will be born in a family of pure surroundings and above material wants; or it may happen that you may be born in the family of yogis. This birth is most fortunate, as being born in such surroundings it is easier to catch the thread of the past lives, to catch the missing thread of the past yogic lives, and continue to work out the remaining course of self-culture and self-development forward from that point.

In this life the devotee, the newborn devotee, gets the yogic culture that he attained in his past life. The yogic buddhi which was his comes back to him in this life by the force of necessary laws of karma and he begins to work again for attainment of perfection. The inner man continues the same throughout all lives and the life of the yoga that he has led in the past has been, during the intervening period between his death and the present birth, assimilated as it were into the very nature of his inner self. Therefore, what he was trying to acquire in his past life by means of voluntary efforts has become now a necessary element of his character and temperament. That is how all development is attained. In acquiring any knowledge, say the knowledge of any language, we have to make conscious efforts in the beginning to grasp its essential elements, but by constant familiarity and practice it becomes assimilated into us. We begin to use

it without any conscious effort to look into its elements in order to put them together as we did in the beginning.

Thus what seemed difficult in the past life, the life of yoga, becomes a matter of pleasure and desire in the present life, and he is irresistibly carried towards the life of yoga, being impelled by a strong desire to acquire it. He works in that direction and lands himself in the world of realization, passing beyond the world of 'Word', *shabda brahman*. All thought has to be carried on by means of word or language, and therefore the yogi also has to carry on the processes of thought, meditation and concentration by means of words or language up to a certain stage. When by constant study, thought and meditation, the ultimate reality, indicated by the 'Word', the *Brahma*, is realized, he becomes independent of the 'Word' and gives up the 'Word'. That is the stage of highest attainment.

Thus by a life of effort, a life of purity, a life of noble thoughts, deep study and concentration, accompanied with unselfish love and universal service, continued for several incarnations, the yogi attains the supreme goal. The life of yoga is higher than mere asceticism. It is higher than a life of mere knowledge. It is higher than a life of mere action. Its glory lies in summing up the merits of all these. The yogi has to be an ascetic because he has to shun the life of sensuality. He has to acquire the highest knowledge, the philosophy of all philosophies, the philosophy of Ultimate Reality, the Absolute Consciousness, the process by which all this universe evolves out of that. He has to be a man of action inasmuch as he has to weed out passivity from his nature to root out idleness, sloth and indolence; to be active in helping and performing acts of universal good; to be active in acquiring knowledge; to be active in meditation; to especially bear in mind that mere passive unconsciousness is not yoga but attainment of the active centre of self-consciousness, the highest centre of universal and incessant activity whence innumerable universes are being projected out and evolved.

To the yogi passivity is hell, sin and death. Activity is heaven, bliss and perfection. Thus the yogi has to be the ideal ascetic, the ideal man of knowledge, and the ideal man of action. His excellence lies in summing up all at its highest and best, at the point of universality in all these. Therefore, I enjoin upon you to be a yogi, and know it and bear this in mind that of these yogis, he who carries his inward mind to the highest point or centre of consciousness, which is My Inmost Being, the point of 'The-Me', by the force of faith, love and thought, is the highest of them all.

DISCOURSE 6

Chapter 7: The Yoga of Wisdom

Having taught the principles of *dhyana* and *abhyasa*, Bhagavan Krishna explains in Chapter 7 the principles, the ultimate principles out of which the universe is evolved. He begins his discourse by telling Arjuna that if he followed the life of yoga and carried out the principles into practice, with his heart fixed upon Bhagavan and with complete reliance upon him, he would in the course of time as a result of the yogic life, come to possess the knowledge of the Lord's essence and being in completeness, without anything like doubt or suspicion troubling him anymore. In short, the knowledge of God's being and nature that is gained by a yogi is not like the ordinary knowledge of ordinary men, full of doubts and uncertainties. It is knowledge gained at first-hand, based upon immediate perception, intuitive experience in respect of the primary elements of self-consciousness.

As long as the externalizing tendency of the mind, the tendency to create agitation and dispersion of the energies of self-consciousness, continues the inner reality is not perceived. That is why the real knowledge, which is marked with certainty, is not attained. The knowledge that the yogi gains is the highest of all. He understands the ultimate reality as it is in Itself. He discovers it within himself as it is in itself, and as it is working there in accordance with its own

inherent principles and thus evolving the entire universe as it is. Once this knowledge is gained with a realization of it, complete knowledge is attained and nothing else remains to be known.

Few, very few, though attend to the call of the Lord. Out of thousands of men, one only or scarcely even one offers or undertakes to follow the life of yoga. Even of those that do strive for the Lord, very few continue and perseveringly pursue this course of life. Thus, few of those who try and earnestly strive after perfection succeed in gaining the knowledge of the Lord. It requires earnestness, steadfastness and firmness in the course adopted.

The Absolute Self as infinite Self-consciousness is ever realizing its own self to itself by its own thought energy. This thought energy is *prakriti*, divine energy or activity. It is twofold in its nature due to the twofold nature of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness in order to realize itself must project itself as its own objective counterpart. The energy or activity concerned in the objective projection of the self-consciousness is *apara*, or comparatively unreal, subject to destruction and perishable, but the energy does not rest in objective projection only. It must, in order to be self-conscious, bring back the objectively projected, the formally differentiated self or 'Myself' of the 'I-am-Myself' to the subjective, the ultimate 'I', asserting and realizing its identity with the subjective or the 'I' of the Absolute Self-consciousness.

This energy or *prakriti* is *para* as it leads to the perception of the real truth and the illumination of real knowledge. This energy supports and maintains the life of the entire universe for if the *apara prakriti* alone were to predominate and have complete sway, there would be no reference back within us in our consciousness to the subject or 'I' within.

Thus there would be no consciousness and life but only death. The *apara prakriti* manifests itself as the *ahamkara* or the differentiated 'I' and gradually transforms itself in accordance with the principles of evolution into *buddhi*,

manas, akasha, vayu, agni, apas and prithvi. The para prakriti stands as the subjective counterpart as the *jiva* at every stage of the evolution of the universe, giving life and consciousness to all the numerous evolved beings of the universe. Thus it is the jiva principle or the subjective principle of the 'I' in Absolute Self-consciousness which maintains and supports the entire universe.

All beings arise out of these two energies, the para and the apara, which are as a matter of fact the two aspects of one thought activity, of one divine energy of self-consciousness, the Mother of all. 'I', as the Absolute Self standing behind this energy but at the same time giving this energy, My essence as its life and support, am Father of all beings. The end, where all beings return to after finishing their course of evolution, the energy as the Mother or womb of all beings, transforms the substance of My Being projected into it when it externalizes itself into various moulds and shapes at the various stages of evolution. The shape assumed by My substance is in accordance with the transformations undergone by the prakriti or energy of the Self-consciousness or 'I am Myself'.

This form assumed by the substance is always apparent and superposed upon it by the prakriti transformations, for as a matter of fact, My substance ever remains in itself the same, the Absolute, formless, Infinite Self-consciousness. The form superposed upon it by prakriti, being a mere superposition, cannot ever remain the same. But it tries to come back to the Absolute substance and thus its process of coming back to Me, of realizing Me and becoming one with Me in My fullness, perfection, infiniteness and absoluteness, appears as the process of growth and development through which self-realization is attained. Thus it is that all beings follow a certain course of development, because at the core of their being, there is the real Absolute Self appearing in various forms, on account of the transformations that the current of Self-consciousness necessarily undergoes in order to be self-conscious.

The transformations are always governed by one principle of becoming objective in the first instance and then flowing back towards the subjective. These transformations or stages of evolution cannot stop at any point unless obstructed in particular cases until that which is in the inmost core, the Infinite and the Absolute, is attained and is capable of manifesting and expressing itself. If this were not done, the energy would stop short of reaching the Absolute, and the consequence would be that it would stop short of being Self-conscious or being Itself which is quite absurd. Therefore, it is that growth and development must go on until the Self is realized.

That is why at every stage we find in the growth and development of all beings that each form that is evolved, however low the stage might be, if there is the least manifestation of self-consciousness or life in it, the form grows and develops under the influence of the relatively Absolute, which is its relatively inner core of being to attain the point of development reached by its parent seed. The plant grows and develops into the tree, the child grows and develops into the father. The seed is the relative seed of the tree, the father is the relative seed of the child. The real seed is 'Myself' projected into the womb of self-conscious energy, and therefore all beings have to develop by a long course of evolution into Myself, the ultimate and Absolute Father of all.

This fact has always to be borne in mind and none should remain content with the narrow development of his powers. He should aspire to develop and expand by love, wisdom and incessant activity until his being encompasses the entire universe and becomes one with Me. My Being is the Absolute. There is nothing higher than it. The entire world of beings is threaded on Me as rows of pearls on a string. Whatever being you may find before you, bear in mind that the inmost essence of that being, of that form of prakriti transformation, the essence that makes it what it is, that keeps up that form, is My own Being. It is relatively different at different stages. Thus what may be the seed at one stage

may be the outcome of a different and more developed stage lying behind.

As long as the prakriti goes on externalizing itself, at each stage after a particular point of externalized development is reached or the point of maturity is attained, a fresh effort towards object or self-projection is made until the end of objectification is reached and the evolution reaches the point of prithvi wherein the subjectivity loses itself in, so to say, complete objectivity. These self-projections of the maturity-attained forms at different stages give rise to different seeds, different planes, or *lokas*, and different beings, to run after a different course of evolution. All are connected together in one whole, ultimately turning round to reach back to the same point of Absolute Self.

The projectors of the seed-forms at various stages are the pitris of the beings of these stages. 'I' as the Absolute, the real and the eternal projector of the seed am the pitri of all pitris, the Father of all Fathers. I have to be realized both as the Absolute seed and the relative seed or that which appears as the seed at particular stages. The seed of apas, the rasa-tanmatra (compare here at every point the 'Philosophy of Evolution' in the appendix) is Myself: the shabda tanmatra in akasha, the gandha in prithvi, the roopa or tejas in agni; the sun, the moon, the *pranav* or *Om* in all the Vedas; the manhood in man; the *tapas*, or strength of meditation and asceticism, in rishis, the wisdom in the wise; the excellence in all that is excellent, the strength in the strong, the virtuous desire in all and the life of all living beings. All these and others like these, the relative seeds, the essences at all stages have to be realized as Myself. Realize Me, Arjuna, in short, as the seed of all.

All the forms, sattwic, rajas and tamas subjective, assertive or objective, proceed from Me. I am not in them but they are in Me and they are coming to Me. Proceeding as forms from Me they cannot have Me, the perfect and the Absolute, Me confined in them, limited in them and conditioned in them. They are from Me no doubt and so they are in Me, conditioned Me, destined to develop and realize themselves in Me.

This difference has to be borne in mind, when it is said that all beings are in Me but I am not in them as beings or transformations undergoing changes, modifications, births and destructions. Their relation to Me is ideal and not physical. The ideas that grow out of my self-conscious expansion produce them by their objectifications. The ideas as such remain in the region of semi-consciousness. Whenever they come under the strong glare of consciousness, whenever the consciousness concentrates its objective attention upon its own ideas, the ideas become objectified and assume external shapes and forms. This law is very well exemplified in the case of dreams.

The ideas that remain in us of the objective universe become under the influence of objective attention of consciousness, objectively transformed into the dream universe. There are also other elements contributing towards the dream-consciousness, but we may overlook them for the present. The entire dream-world is thus a transformation of our own ideal or idealful consciousness and so the whole of it is in us, but we cannot be said to be conditioned and limited in the dream world. However we might seem to be identified with it, so long as the dream-consciousness predominates, our being is not limited to it. We in ourselves do not commence to be with the being of any particular dream-world and we do not cease to be with its assertion. So our being while containing the dream-world, sustaining the dream-world being, its life and essence, having given to it the ideal seed, pervading it by our dream-consciousness through and through are at the same time over, above and beyond it, unconditioned by it as its Absolute Self.

In the same way the entire universe being an objective transformation of My ideas (Mark here the difference: the ideas of the dream-world are derived from the external universe, the ideas of the world-evolution dream are derived from the action and interaction of the elements of My Self-consciousness as shown in the 'Philosophy of Evolution' in the appendix) under the influence of the objective attention

of My Self-consciousness, proceeds from Me, is in Me, but I am not in it, conditioned by it. My Being does not commence with its being, does not cease with its cessation, though pervading it through and through, penetrating into it ideally through and through and over and above and beyond it, its Absolute and infinite Self remaining ever in Myself unmoved, unaffected, unmodified by its mode and modifications.

The entire universe coming under the overpowering spell of the three modes or *gunas* of My self-asserting, self-realizing infinite energy, the *moola prakriti*, regards the objects that arise out of the action and interaction of the three modes, *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* or 'I-ness', 'Am-ness' and 'Myself-ness', as real independent objects having existence of themselves, independent of the ultimate consciousness standing behind. Thus deluded, the beings of the universe do not make an attempt to turn back the external-going will and reach Me, the Absolute and unmodified Self. This *maya* or divine energy of Mine in its externalizing aspect is most difficult to overcome.

Those who come unto Me and take refuge under the shelter of My teachings, acting up to the principles inculcated therein, succeed in setting up the counter-subjective current of consciousness, and thus in going across the sea of objective delusion. The evil doers, the sinners, those who do not control their passions, and allow themselves to be ruled by lower nature, can never come to Me and accept My teachings. Their reason is overpowered by ignorance and objective delusion, *maya*, and therefore they accept the *asura* attitude or the attitude of sinners.

The righteous who resort to Me are of four kinds: Those who are suffering from misfortunes seek Me to get rid of them. Those who are self-interested seek Me to have their interests fulfilled. These are lower orders of My devotees. The third are those who come to Me as seekers for knowledge. They approach Me as their teacher. The fourth are those who know Me and love Me as their own Self. Of all these, the fourth, the *jnani*, or the knowing one, is the

highest and the best. He is dearest to Me and I am dearest to him. There is complete unity of self between both of us.

All those who seek me for whatever reason it might be, are noble and laudable but the jnani, the wise and the knowing is absolutely one with Myself, My Inmost Self. He has realized Me after incessant struggle to conquer the objective and externalizing tendencies of the maya or prakriti continued through several lives and that this all is the eternal absolute Vasudeva. This Mahatma full of universal love, universal compassion and pity, breathing pure knowledge and wisdom, revealing the secret principles that underlie the evolution of the universe, blessing the world, groaning at its suffering and misfortunes, with his divine love, compassion and wisdom is the highest on the tree of divine humanity, growing up from the divine seed of divine man. He is most difficult to find. The aim of evolution is to produce such perfect men or Mahatmas.

The others who do not approach Me but are led towards other gods, being governed by their various innumerable desires under the belief that those gods would fulfil their desires, also come unto Me through an indirect and crooked path. They worship the various gods who are my various limited manifestations. The powers that they develop by the worship of those gods are really due to the development of the powers lying latent within them, their Inmost Self which is Me. They do not realize this and therefore they devote themselves to external gods, and get limited fruits out of their devotion. It is due to their small intelligence or defective understanding that they adopt this course of going to external gods and not coming to Me: their Inmost Absolute Self.

The ignorant regard even Me as manifest or limited and conditioned by my manifestations. They forget my absolute nature, the unmodified, the unmodifiable and unchangeable nature of Mine. They go out to seek Me in the external as other than themselves. It is a pity that they do not turn their vision inside and find Me residing within them as the soul of their soul and life of their life. All cannot understand Me, as the

external working of the divine energy conceals my nature, and just as in dream the ideas lying within appear to be externalized objects under the spell of objectively-projected attention, so the whole universe appears to be external and independent. It is due to the same force of objective inclination or attention that I am also regarded as an external manifested being.

The world under delusion mentioned above does not realize My true being as eternal and unchangeable. I, being the source of all, know the entire past, present and future. The beings that are still controlled by the objective current know Me not at all. The great enemies of real progress towards the subjective realization are desire and repulsion. These distract the mind, make it attracted towards one, repelled from another, keeping it always under excitement and agitation.

When the energy of consciousness sets itself up to realize itself, it first goes into objective externalization. It is then that the reflections of the absolute as the subjective counterparts of the transformations of prakriti, being dragged towards the external under the force of the prakriti, begin to desire the pleasant and hate the unpleasant. The distraction commences, objective delusion gets stronger, and miseries and misfortunes delude the world. Those who perceive this put an end to desires and repulsions and exercise their will, dispel the delusion by means of knowledge, overcome the principle of desire and hatred by acts of universal love and charity. They get dissatisfied with the world as it is full of sufferings of decay and death.

Being disgusted with the miseries of limited existence, the misfortunes of samsara, they accept My teachings, come under the banner of My school and try to achieve success leading to perfection, by following the life I inculcate. It is they who succeed in getting knowledge of the six principles: the Brahma, the adhyatma, the karma, the adhibhuta, the adhidaiva and the adhiyajna. Those who understand and realize these acquire the fitness of preserving their inner self-consciousness at the time of death and they depart from this world in conscious unity with My Absolute Self.”

DISCOURSE 7

Chapter 8: The Yoga of the Imperishable Brahman

As the Lord has finished Chapter 7 mentioning the six principles which the yogi succeeds in mastering, Arjuna very naturally questions as to what these principles are: 1. Brahman, 2. adhyatma, 3. karma, 4. adhibhuta, 5. adhidaiva, 6. adhiyajna.

He also asks as to how the Lord is to be realized at the time of death by the yogis.

The reply is that the first principle is Brahman that principle which is absolute, as out of all relation, *Paramam*, infinite as pervading all and being pervaded by none and therefore as having its existence in itself or being existence in itself indestructible, *aksharam*.

The word *aksharam* means both all-pervading, from the root *akshu*, to pervade, and also indestructible. Thus in order to find out this principle, we have to search for one which may have absolute existence or existence per se. All that we see before us exists only in relation to some other. The world of the senses cannot have existence in itself. It exists in relation of the senses to the mind and the knower behind. Take away the senses and the world of senses as such as known by the senses drops into nothingness.

Whatever else there may be left beside it, the world of atoms according to the atomists, or the world of forces and

energies according to those who advocate the energetic view of the world, that is a different thing altogether. The world as seen and felt by us, the world of objects with shabda, sparsha, roopa, etc., the world of experience made up of sensations and perceptions can have no place out of relation to the senses. So this cannot be said to exist in and of itself or to exist per se. The world of mind, the world of ideas, the sphere of Kantian categories can no more be said to exist of themselves, for they always presuppose the mind or the knower whose ideas a priori or a posteriori they may be.

The world of the sense objects presupposes the senses and through the senses, the knower behind. The world of internal ideas presupposes the same knower. Having exhausted thus the entire field of our world of experience, we come to the conclusion that there is nothing in it which is existence in itself or which exists per se.

The position might be taken up that there is nothing which exists per se, but that would be absurd, for in that case there can be no conception of existence, as relative existence or existence as depending upon another must necessarily lead to some principle which exists of itself independently. Existence in relation means dependent existence, derivative existence. To admit this sort of existence, the existence that is derived, and to deny this source from which the existence might be derived, is most unreasonable and absurd. It is to admit the sonship of the son, and at the same time to deny the existence of the father.

You may say, you don't like to ascend higher, to trace the change of relations further back to the source, but you cannot say there is no source. There must be some principle, some real existence from which the entire world of experience derives its existence. There is no alternative, either to admit the world of experience to be existing per se or to have derived its existence from another principle which is to be found out. The former proposition is untenable. The world of experience has no existence per se either as a whole or in its parts. As an object of experience it always refers to

a subject behind it, to an experienter, a perceiver, a knower. Take away this subject, and the world of experience, as such, as experienced and felt, vanishes. What is left behind if we confine ourselves to our experience alone, when we strike off the objective side, is nothing but the subject.

You may talk of atoms and forces, but they are equal to nothing if they do not enter into the world of experience, either on the objective or the subjective side. If they form an element of the objective side, they must be related to the subject as known and felt by it. Thus they, as known and felt by the subject, can have no independent existence in themselves. So only one principle is left: the subject, the knower which has always to be presumed as the necessary a priori condition of all experience.

Has this knower existence *per se* or not? It may be argued that it has not. It exists in relation to the known, to the world of experience as its object. Cut off this world of experience and the knower, the experienter, ceases to know, ceases to experience and thus drops into nothingness and vanishes. The argument is plausible, but there is one defect in it. It assumes that the knower, the subject, can have no other known or object before it except the world of experience. It overlooks that the knower, the subject, can have its own self, its own existence, as the object or the known before it in order to exist as the knower or the subject. The world of experience being the object, does presuppose a subject and it cannot be its own subject because the subject as such, the subject in its own subjective aspect, must be outside objective experience.

The subject being, the knower, in the same way cannot be said to have its known or object outside itself. For, if it does not know itself, does not know its own existence, it cannot know the world of experience. In every act of experience, it asserts its own existence. First, it asserts itself as being there, however vaguely it might be, and then it asserts that it knows the world of experience. In every sense perception there is the incessant assertion of the existence of the subject, the self

or the knower. When I see a tree over there, I never realize the act of sense perception as: 'See a tree'. It is always: 'I see a tree', always meaning that: 'I am' and 'I know that I am'. It is not only that: 'I am' but 'I am seeing a tree'. All this is implied in the consciousness which expresses itself as 'I see a tree'.

So the subject presupposed by the world of experience as its necessary a priori condition is the subject as knowing itself, as feeling its own existence, as having its own existence as its object in the first instance, before it can have any other experience superadded to its consciousness of itself or to its self-consciousness. Therefore, if the world of experience drops off, this self-knowing subject, this subject which knows itself as its own object still remains with its line of consciousness continued and unbroken, simply with the superaddition of the world of experience having gone off. That is why during all our various phases of existence the conditions of consciousness – the wakeful, the dream, or the deep sleep – this self-knowing 'I', this consciousness of the self-knowing 'I', continues.

When we get up after deep sleep we do not find the thread of consciousness broken up, but even the sleep, experience as negation of the world, of the objective world of experience, is realized as an object superadded to the self-knowing 'I'. We express the consciousness of sleep when we say that we slept so well, so comfortably, peacefully, that there was absolute negation of the objective world of experience and we knew nothing of it.

The consciousness of this absence indicates that even the deepest sleep is not devoid of consciousness, but the consciousness though turned towards the object is without any object or particular object before it except the negation of objective experience. But it does not do away with the subject, the experiencer, experiencing itself along with the negation of the objective world of experience. Thus this subject continues all along through all conditions of consciousness, so the entire field of the world of experience and even beyond it when it is negated can alone be the all-

pervading, the all-encompassing, the ultimate, the absolute, the paramam and the aksharam and therefore the Brahman.

This Absolute or Brahman being the only principle that has existence per se or in itself must have the explanation of all that is within itself. It must be self-sufficient for its own existence and sufficient to explain the existence of others. Its self-sufficiency or absoluteness must depend upon its being self-existent or its having self-conscious existence. To suppose that it is not self-conscious will either mean that it is outside the world of consciousness entirely, and in that case absolutely nothing, for existence can have no meaning if it has no existence in its own consciousness or in the consciousness of anyone else other than it. An unknown, unfelt, unrecognized existence is mere non-existence.

To suppose it then as an alternative, that it is in the consciousness of some other, would be to deprive it of the character of Absolute subject, to make it an object dependent and relative which, as it is established above, it is not. Then it must be admitted to have consciousness of itself. In order to have this consciousness which it cannot help having from its very nature, it must set itself up, assert itself as its own object. In this assertion of its self-existence it must posit itself as its object, formally different from itself for the time being.

If the object posited by it be not formally different, at least different insofar as it appears to be objective, it will not be caught hold of, seized or grasped as an object, and the consciousness would remain in the subject unrealized, the subject remaining unconscious instead of self-conscious. The subject or Brahman being Absolute and therefore self-conscious cannot but assert itself as its own formally-different object. This self-assertion of Brahman, this positing of an object by Brahman as a necessary assertion of its self-consciousness is the principle of *adhyatma* or *swabhava*, meaning assertion of self-existence, *swena bhavati iti swabhavah*.

As soon as this assertion of the objectivity takes place, the attention of Brahman becoming engrossed for the time

being on the objectively-asserted self or, properly speaking, not-self in opposition to the subject, the subject, Brahman or the Absolute Self is for the time being given up, forgotten or kept in the background of consciousness. Necessarily, for without it the objective assertion cannot have its objective character accentuated, and without this accentuation of objectivity the absolute subject cannot be self-conscious.

This temporary giving up or keeping in the background of consciousness, the Brahman, or the Absolute subject, makes the posited or asserted object acquire a seeming independent existence with the consciousness of the subject or the ultimate and absolute subject remaining there all along, but in the background. That is how the finite or limited being arises. It is nothing but this asserted or posited object as the external body with a vague, indefinite consciousness of the subject in the background. This finite being, being finite and limited, becomes many in accordance with the various modifications of the objective consciousness of Brahman as detailed elsewhere in the 'Philosophy of Evolution', the appendix.

Here we get the third principle due to the *visarga* or *tyaga*, or giving up or allowing to remain in the background the consciousness of absolute subject or Brahman after the objective assertion giving rise to the existence, or *bhav* of *bhoot*, or objective being, *bhootabhavodbhavakarah*, and so this principle is said to be karma as it is first action that gives rise to the manifestation of the entire universe.

The same principle works all along and in all beings. We find the object as the external body having the subject within it lying in the background of consciousness and in the scale of progress, the being is higher in proportion as the subject is brought into prominence, manifestation or clear expression instead of being allowed to remain lying in the background. This would represent the higher ascent of the current of consciousness towards self-realization. The object asserted being necessarily finite as such, becomes the root of the principle of perishableness, transitoriness, passing-ness or becoming-ness, *ksharobhavah*.

The object as such cannot be above change, for it is in change only that it lives. It keeps itself up by differentiation. It is as differentiated, though formally merely from the subject that it is posited and asserted, and as such it must go on becoming more and more differentiated, more and more transformed, assuming one form after another under the influence of the three elements of consciousness the 'T', *sattwa*; the 'Am', *rajas*; and the 'Myself', *tamas*.

As the subject that sets it up is by its very nature eternal and infinite, the setting up goes on ad infinitum and the object is as well infinite in succession, in change, in modifications, infinite in appearing under infinite forms; while the subject is infinite in sameness, continuance and permanence. The subject ever realizing itself goes on setting up the object ad infinitum. The infiniteness of the subject manifests itself by the setting up into the infinite objective world of experience full of changes, destruction and death, but never entirely passing away, nonetheless always appearing before the subject, the Brahman, as its asserted object and appearing to be the reflections of the same subject as the subjective counterparts of the objective world of experience that lie in the background, potential and latent, as a world of an infinite series of successions of forms and events. The principle of the subject lying behind every object latently and potentially in it to be developed and awakened into full expression of the Absolute divinity, is the principle of *Purusha* or *adhidaivatam*, just as the object is the principle of *adhibhuta*, as perishable or *ksharobhava*.

This principle of *adhidaivatam* is the individual soul, which is the Absolute Itself left for the present to the background of consciousness with the current of its attention absorbed in the objective. It is due to this absorption in the objective that the *Purusha* appears to be finite, as the objective side or *sharira* is finite. The entire world of miseries which is necessarily attached to finite existence seems to overwhelm it on account of its association or identification with the objective side. However weakened it might be on

account of the attention of consciousness running away from it or flowing away from it to the outside, it is the only principle that gives life, illumination and consciousness to a being. Hence it is said to be *adhidaivatam* or the principle that illumines, reveals, or makes us conscious.

Up to this point the self, the current of self-consciousness of the Absolute has been working towards the objective, accentuating the objective, giving it an apparently differentiated shape and form. But if the principle of differentiation alone dominates, and the object is allowed to remain there as an entirely different principle, the consciousness of it would only be consciousness of the other and the consciousness of self leading to self-consciousness would not be possible. That is the reason why the object has not only to be set up and differentiated, it is also to be swallowed back and assimilated in the realization of its substantial identity with the subject.

That is why in our self-consciousness expressed as 'I know myself' or deeper still 'I am myself', the 'myself', though on account of its position appears to be different for the time being from the 'I', still we realize the 'myself' as one with the 'I' in 'myself am I'.

So for self-realized self-consciousness or for the life of self-consciousness, the setting up of the object or objective side as different and then assimilating it as identical, both of these are necessary. This principle that works towards establishing the substantial identity between the object and the subject, which draws to itself, *karshati*, the entire world of objective experience as its own manifestation as identically one with it; which fills the whole world with infinite love and compassion based upon the perception of essential unity of all beings with itself; which receives the whole world of objects as an offering at its altar to be transformed, assimilated and identified with its own inner essence; which in infinite love does not stand aloof from the world of miseries, but pervading it through and through, works in us all to drag us up gradually through the course of evolution through the path of *nivritti* to the Absolute and

Infinite Brahman, the abode of infinite peace and bliss – is the principle of *adhiyajna*.

This principle of *adhiyajna*, the Lord says, is ‘He’ Himself in all beings. It is His influence that has given rise to the various forms of religion, the various forms of worship, the various systems or schools of philosophy, the various attempts at the attainment of the Absolute and the Infinite. He exhorts Arjuna to realize that he is constantly working to carry back the entire objective current towards identity with the Absolute Brahman. Therefore this principle of *adhiyajna*, this ‘Krishna’ who is drawing all after Himself, is to be remembered, to be meditated upon, to be seized in contemplation.

At the time of death, in order to overcome the principle of objectivity, externalization, finiteness and limitation, the Lord says, “Bear in mind that the moment when death takes place is the most important and critical moment. The one objective side that had been set up and had manifested in one body is going to be negated and another objective counterpart will have, in the course of time, to be set up. This seed for the next objective counterpart or body is to be laid at that moment. As long as one assertion of objective counterpart lasts, the tendencies or inclinations that have arisen out of our past karma of this life remain to a certain extent in the background behind the objective, already asserted the existing sharira, pressed back as it were by the predominating force of the existing sharira. But one assertion becoming exhausted and one objectively asserted sharira being negated, the accumulated tendencies, the *samskaras*, push themselves forth to set up a fresh objective or fresh sharira.

Therefore, the *bhava* or the idea of the moment is most important as it has no strong existing objective sharira to press it back, but it will have its full sway and can either give you another objective counterpart or sharira after its own model. Or if this idea is centred in Me, the *adhiyajna*, it will lead you to unity with My Being, and thus put an end to the

miseries of finite existence. Therefore I emphatically enjoin upon you not to forget Me at any time; remember always My words and heroically enter into the battle of life. Never shrink from the discharge of your duty. Never shrink from laying your life at the altar of *adhiyajna*. This battle that lies before you is necessary for the principle of *adhiyajna* represented by the cause of Yudhishtira to conquer. The principle of the world, tyranny and oppression represented by Duryodhana has to be overthrown.

So engage in the fight, Arjuna, for My sake with your manas, buddhi and your entire being centred in Me and you will attain Me without any doubt. This attainment cannot be effected in a day. It can only be the result of *abhyasa yoga* or continued practice until it becomes impossible for the mind to forget the Absolute Self and run in other directions. When the abhyasa as pointed out by Me is continually followed up, then it becomes possible to die at the end in full contemplation of the all-illuminating Purusha, which leads to final emancipation (slokas 1-8)."

In slokas 9, 10, 11 and 12 Bhagavan points out the method of focusing the dissipated rays of self-consciousness into one centre by means of the concentration of prana, whence the entire self-concentrated, self-conscious being may be carried back to its own source, the manifest Brahman, or still higher the unmanifest, the *akshara*, or the Absolute Itself. The prana with its vibrations represents, as pointed out before, the pulsations of the individualized consciousness or *chit*, and hence the fixity of prana results in the fixity or concentration of chit. The chit and the prana are the two aspects or phases, the subjective and the objective sides of one and the same existence, the individualized consciousness or *jivatma*. The chit or prana in motion or vibration means energizing the principle of consciousness towards objective manifestation.

Once the chit is set in motion, it projects outside in various combinations the ideas that lie embedded in its inherent nature and these projections objectify themselves

into the form of this universe. That is how the universe appears in dream to the individualized consciousness; that is also how the universe of the wakeful or *jagrat* state manifests in relation to the consciousness of *Hiranyagarbha* or Brahman the aggregate of several individualized conscious existences. Thus the chit in motion or vibration is at the root of universe manifestation, which in its turn brings about the miseries of finite existence. So to put an end to this misery producing universe manifestation, it is necessary to put a stop to vibration. This can be effected either subjectively, by operating upon the mind by the force of will to put a stop to it by going into its modifications, or objectively by controlling and suppressing the prana vibrations by means of pranayama.

Both the methods require to be helped by *vairagya* or the spirit of renunciation, which by analytically examining the objects of enjoyment comes to the conclusion that there is no real pleasure in those objects at all. They are merely miseries in disguise and so should be given up with all the strength of our inner being that may be available. There must at the same time be faith, earnestness and devotion to help in the acquisition of the stability of chit or prana. There can be no strong effort directed towards the attainment without these necessary qualities and, to crown all, there must be strong love for the object of attainment as it is that emotion only which can spur us on towards putting forth our energies and maintain us in that position.

When by these means the fixity of mind or chit is attained, the prana spanda or chitta spanda come to a standstill. The universe begins to disappear, the limitations begin to fall off and the supremely blissful condition of Absolute Consciousness begins to take the place of the former miserable condition of finite existence. Before this total cessation of chitta spanda takes place, the devotee has to pass through several lower stages.

One of these stages is described in sloka 10, which corresponds to a certain extent with the khechari mudra

of other systems. The prana when it begins to lower its vibrations on account of the practice of concentration, ceases to go out beyond the nostrils. It begins to course back through the sushumna artery lying in the spinal column, passing through the various chakras, until it reaches the middle of the eyebrows. The prana has gradually to work its way through the sushumna and when it reaches this point it becomes so much concentrated as to enable the devotee to be in unison with the consciousness of the universal soul or the manifest Brahman.

The Absolute has two aspects or sides of its existence. As related to the universe, it stands as its subjective counterpart as the seer, the knower, or the dreamer. This aspect is known as the Ishwara Saguna Brahman, Mayashawalit Brahman, the Shabda Brahman, the Word of the Bible or the Logos of the Greek Philosophy. This Ishwara or Purusha has three phases: 1. the sleeping, 2. the dreaming and 3. the wakeful, known as the Ishwara Narayan or Shiva, Hiranyagarbha or Brahman and Virat or Vishnu.

The yogi who succeeds in carrying his prana up to the middle of the eyebrows, or the *ajna chakra*, attains the consciousness of the world-related aspect of the Absolute or Saguna Brahman. The forces that carry the devotee to the position of Purusha or Saguna Brahman are yogic concentration and devotion or *bhakti* based upon the emotion of universal love. This Saguna Brahman being realized as the soul and the life of the entire universe has to be grasped and realized by the individual when he expands his emotional, volitional and intellectual natures to the point of the universal. In short, by intellectual unity with the Ishwara as one's own soul and inmost life; by emotional unity through love for all His manifestations; and by willing service rendered to all beings as the forms in which the Purusha has manifested Himself.

The ultimate reality, the Absolute Itself, is the highest point of attainment and therefore the succeeding sloka points out the way to the Absolute Consciousness Itself.

The teacher Sri Krishna stands unified with that Absolute Itself, and hence while speaking of this most difficult path, He refers to Himself as the point to be reached. That is in consonance with the practice of all teachers of Brahma Vidya, as we find in the Upanishads, that during the time when the highest teaching is imparted the teacher, in order to be consistent never identifies himself with the Saguna Brahman but always refers to Himself as the Nirguna Brahman or the Highest Absolute.

So Sri Krishna says, Now, Arjuna, I am going to expound to you the path which leads to the immutable or the indestructible, the *akshara*. This word akshara is used to denote some difference between the Saguna and Nirguna Brahman. The Ishwara as such can have no existence apart from the universe, and thus when the sleep, the so-called sleep of Narayana, vanishes the Saguna Brahman as such ceases to be. Though in his own essence, as one with Para Brahman or the Absolute Itself, he never ceases to be. The Saguna Brahman in his various phases thus appears and disappears while the Para Brahman or the Nirguna Brahman ever remains the immutable, the indestructible basis or *adhisthana* of these appearances and disappearances. This akshara has to be entered into by complete non-attachment which includes perfect Brahmacharya, but as the practice of Brahmacharya is about three-quarters of *vitara*ga, freedom from attachment, it has been separately mentioned.

The least attachment to any manifested phenomenon or form throws the veil of finiteness over the infinite consciousness, and the realization of the highest point is obstructed. Each individual is finite only because it has some attachment towards the seemingly objective other. Throw off this attachment and you at once feel that you are not the finite but the infinite, the unconditioned and the Absolute. But the attachment strengthened by the force of habit or *samskara* acquired during innumerable ages through innumerable births refuses to be thrown off and resists our attempts to get rid of it with obstinacy and persistence.

Hence there is the necessity of training and discipline of the life of Brahmacharya, wherein you have to give up all the pleasures of the senses to live the life of austerities, devoting all your energies towards the acquisition of truth for its own sake.

This life is calculated in due course to enable you to overcome the force of objective attachment. When you will be able to set yourself free from the bondage of raga, you will be able to walk on the path which leads to unity with Me, the Absolute Existence. You have to close up all the gates of passages, the senses through which the energy of consciousness goes out into the objective universe, and to withdraw the manas, the mind, into the heart or the inner self. The prana by the practice mentioned before has to be carried up into the cavity of the head or the Brahmarandhra by means of yogic concentration. It has not to be left in ajna chakra as in the previous sloka.

The question might be, how is all this to be accomplished? How is the prana to be carried up to that high point? After the senses have been withdrawn from the objective universe and the mind has been held back within the heart, what force is to be depended upon to carry the apparently finite consciousness to the point of the Infinite? The only force available is that of the pranava or *Om*. It denotes not only the three phases of the Sagun Brahman by its three letters (A, U, and M) but it also indicates the Para Brahman by the fourth or *ardhamatra* and so it has to be meditated upon. Its inner meaning the *ardhamatra*, the fourth, which refers to Me has to be repeatedly brought before the inner vision of the soul. He who follows this path and in this condition of unity with Me leaves this body attains to the Absolute Itself.

Having described the method by which the yogis attain unto Me at the time of death, I must tell you that it would not be possible to follow that method at the critical moment of departure from this mundane existence unless proper preparation and training have been made for it from before.

The *akshara* or the immutable principle which is My real Self and which is referred to by Me as Myself cannot be attained unless the mind be undividedly directed towards it. If you allow any object other than Me to share your attention, My essence would remain unrealized. Therefore, you have to be constantly thinking upon Me, never allowing your thought or mind to divert itself into any other channel. I can be easily attained by one who is possessed of this undivided constant devotion.

It should be clearly borne in mind by you that there are only two alternatives: either you have to come to Me, be one with Me, the Infinite and the Absolute Self, or you have to fall into the mire of illusion which is full of numerous births and deaths that can bring nothing but miseries, sorrows and misfortunes. The life of a finite individual as such can never be happy. The very finiteness of his nature creates insatiable and innumerable wants and desires. As long as the condition of finiteness lasts, the wants never cease, the desires continue to grow, the lower passions, the numerous sorrows and disappointments, the numberless misfortunes continue to oppress and harass the life of the poor individual.

In spite of the various remedies proposed by the worldly-minded, unwise people the real blissful condition which is inherent in the nature of *atma*, your inmost self, is not allowed to manifest and appear. Both the alternatives lie before you. It is now for you to choose, which way you will go. I stand here as the representative of the infinite, the all-pure, the desireless, self-satisfied, blissful consciousness. The world full of illusions, full of miseries stands there to embrace you and make you subject to births and deaths. The mahatmas, the great ones, choose the path that leads to Me and shun the other that leads to the world of illusions. They therefore attain perfection. That trial is difficult. It is the ordeal of fire by which you are to be tested. Remember you have to give up all: the world in its entirety up to the Brahmaloka; the entire world of names and forms, *nama* and *roopa*; the entire world of sensual, finite or individualized existence.

Look around you and you will find that it is impossible to separate changeableness, perishableness from individualized existence. Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva as individuals, whoever they may be, must come to an end, must perish. The only imperishable, the unchangeable, the immutable principle is the Me, My Inmost Self-consciousness or rather the Absolute Consciousness which is neither I, mine, me nor thou, thine, which is consciousness per se beyond all names and forms, beyond all modifications. The so-called modifications of consciousness are never real.

All our perceptions and sensations are nothing but apparent modifications of consciousness, apparent modes in which the consciousness appears to exist. Just think awhile, can these sensations and perceptions be anything other than consciousness itself? Let them stand aside outside consciousness and they drop out of consciousness, we cease to feel them and they become nothing. So whatever tries to be other than consciousness ceases to be and falls into the jaws of death. The world is nothing but sensations and perceptions, which are nothing but consciousness itself.

Thus consciousness per se or itself which 'I am', is this whole universe; the appearance of the universe as different from the 'I am' is a seeming and apparent existence as that of a dream. The entire dream-world is nothing at the bottom but the objectively projected 'I am' or Self-consciousness of the dreamer, and so this entire universe is the objectively-projected dream of 'My', 'I am' or Self-consciousness. If you follow this dreamy existence of the formal universe as your goal, the finiteness with which you have been invested on account of your attention being directed to this objective seeming-ness will continue to become more and more thick, tough and gross, increasing thus the amount of sorrow, anxieties, disappointments and miseries.

Ponder over this well in your mind and withdraw your attention from the directions in which it is flowing out and let its current course back towards Me, the 'I am' of your Inmost Self. Then the veil shall fall off and the mystery of

existence stand before you revealed in its true nature. You remain awake, you go to sleep and you fall into dreams, but you never understand what all this really means! They indicate the root principles that lie embedded in the thought activity of the eternal Self. The wakeful, the *jagrat* condition, is followed by the condition of sleep, which bursts forth into the condition of dream. What stands before thought as its object in wakeful condition, what stands to thought or mind in the relation of thinker and thought, or conceiver and conceived, becomes merged in the condition of sleep as if it were nowhere in some condition where it cannot be traced.

The ideas of the wakeful or *jagrat* condition becoming merged in the sleep or *sushupti* condition start into manifestation in the *swapna* or condition of the dream. This *swapna* is another *jagrat* which has one *jagrat* before it as its cause and *sushupti* as its condition of manifestation. So each *jagrat* or objectively manifested world has to be preceded by another *jagrat*, in which seed ideas are stored up, and by a *sushupti* or sleep as the condition to allow the seed idea to manifest its objects. The *jagrat* of *swapna* is explained by the *sushupti* and the *jagrat* preceding it. Sometimes the *jagrat* of one *swapna* becomes the basis of another *swapna-jagrat* with a *sushupti* acting as its condition.

As each *jagrat* has behind it a *jagrat* and *sushupti*, so the present *jagrat* which passes under the name of the universe must have a *jagrat* wherein its seed ideas were stored up (see appendix 'The Theory of Evolution') and a *shushupti* or self-forgetfulness following upon the devotion to the objective side, leading to, for the time being, the merger of the objective perception, allowing thus the ideas of the preceding objectively-conscious condition of *jagrat* to appear with greater objective vividness, concreteness and firmness as a *swapna-jagrat* or an objectively-perceived universe.

The ideas detailed in the appendix 'Theory of Evolution' continue growing until the 'I' series are complete. This growth and development is in a condition of objective consciousness. At the end of the 'I' series when the 'Am'

series commence, the 'I' is pushed back into something like oblivion, and the 'Am' comes up and the condition of sleep begins. Here the Narayana appears in sleep, resting upon the Sesha in *Kshiramudra*, or the ocean of 'I' series, the Sesha representing the objective attitude which supports the Narayana in the condition of sleep.

In this condition, the ideas of the previous jagrat undergo transformations and modifications under the influence of the 'Am', which invests them with objective concreteness on account of its assertive force. It makes them appear as if existing more and more in themselves, apparently on account of the strength of the principle of 'Am' or existence. Thus after a time when the 'Am' series is finished, the root principles of the previous jagrat or 'I' series on the ground of the self-forgetfulness of the 'Am' series, begin to manifest themselves as individualized objective beings and planes of the 'Myself' series. This is swapna in relation to the previous jagrat but jagrat in relation to other swapnas that follow it. Thus there are series of jagrat and swapna with a sushupti or self-forgetfulness intervening, as the ground of manifestation for each swapna. Each jagrat during its continuance represents a day, or *ahah*, and each relative swapna with a sushupti as its ground is a night or *ratri*.

The four yugas taken together make up a *mahayuga*. One thousand such mahayugas make up one day of Brahma in which the ideas are developed and matured. Again during another thousand mahayugas, the period of divine sleep, the developed ideas produce the illusory manifestation of the numerous universes. These manifestations are merely apparent and unreal. The reality, the Absolute with its eternal Self-consciousness, remains at the bottom, ever in blissful condition. Its fathomless depth which is My Real Being is never disturbed.

The apparent phenomenal disturbances are confined to 'I', 'Am' and 'Myself' series which arise out of the inherent pulsations of My infinite consciousness as so many ripples, waves and eddies upon the surface of the deep sea; as dream

upon the deep consciousness of the sleeping individual. The waves do not and cannot affect the fathomless depth of the ocean, nor can the dream affect the real being of the consciousness of the sleeping individual. Thus the universe or innumerable universes continue appearing and disappearing over Me, without touching Me in the least. Those who understand this principle of manifestation of the universe understand the philosophy of day and night.

Thus the manifestation of the principles or of individual beings at a later stage takes place when the principle of day predominates, that is, when the objectively-inclined thought activity has alone with it in the background the principle of subjectivity. When the predominance of the objectivity reaches its limit, the principle of subjectivity begins to give way and gradually loses itself for the time being. Then the night or the principle of sleep comes in. When during the continuance of this sleep or night, the principle of subjectivity reappears, after submersion for sometime in the concrete form of an embodied entity, the principle of objectivity reappears simultaneously in the concrete form of the dream universe.

This is swapna in relation to the first jagrat, but in itself it is jagrat and it is so also in relation to succeeding sleep or dream, if any. The entire world of existence is thus made up of these conditions or states of consciousness: jagrat, sushupti and swapna. In order to reach back to the ultimate principle of the Absolute, we shall have to pass through several layers of swapna, sushupti and jagrat. Then we shall reach the principle which is neither manifest like the object or day, nor unmanifest like the ideas in sleep, which is above both these principles and which never perishes in the midst of the objects that perish all around. That is the Absolute Self, the real Inmost Self of yours. That is *avyakta* or *akshara*, the unmanifest or the imperishable.

Once this principle is attained there is no coming back thence. That is My Supreme abode.

This Absolute Being or Be-ness cannot be attained with divided attention. This has to be reached by a devotion

which has no other object before it except this Absolute Self, *ananyabhakti*. Bear in mind if you think of anything else except Me, the Absolute Self, as real, as existing, as claiming your attention and devotion, your mind becomes distracted, its energies become dissipated and it becomes incapable of attaining Me, the eternal Self. You have to understand that there are two kinds of yogis, following two different paths and they attain to different results according to the paths they follow.

The one is the white path, the path of light, where the principle of knowledge, strong and critical analysis of the objects that go to make up the existence of the universe, have to be strenuously carried on. Just like the principle of day and night, which go to make up one complete circle of existence, there is the principle of *uttarayan* and *dakshinayan* that go to make up one complete circle of annual existence.

In the *uttarayan* portions of the six months of the year, the principle of the Sun which stands for subjectivity predominates; the days are longer, the principle of fire predominates. The heat is stronger. On the white path of yoga, emphasis is laid upon the principle of knowledge, *jnana*, the principle of analysis, *vichara* and the principle of renunciation, *tyaga*.

In the black or *Krishnapaksha* you get the smoke instead of the fire; the light of knowledge is not so brilliant, the emotions, the affections, the attachments of the world are not entirely cut asunder, the desire for *swarga*, for a higher pleasurable state of existence which stands for the root fuel causing smoke, is allowed to remain. The desire for the continuance of individual life is allowed to create the darkness of the night. Only the weak light of the moon is expected to enter at the end of the light in *Krishnapaksha*, to show dimly some features of truth at the end of life, which is represented by *dakshinayan*.

The principle of smoke, meaning half or semidigested knowledge; the principle of night, meaning the submersion of subjectivity in self-forgetfulness; the *Krishnapaksha* which

means ignorance in the beginning with hopes of light at the end, indicates the *pravritti marga*, the path of karma and upasana. The yogi following this path reaches at the end the dim light of the moon at the most and has to return back to the sorrowful mundane existence, as he has been following the path of darkness.

Whereas the follower of the white or *shukla* who burns up the passions, desires and attachments in the strong heat of the fire of wisdom, who reduces to ashes the desire to live, the desire for individual life in the scorching heat of the sun of true knowledge, leaves this finite existence when the principle of *uttarayan* or subjectivity predominates into him. With the principle of shuklapaksha, so far as his life in the world was concerned, predominating in that, his life commences in knowledge or jnana. In the very morning of his life he is led by the light of knowledge and is not subject to the illusions of ignorance. He does not expect in future to attain liberation or freedom, to attain the moon of freedom or liberation giving him infinite bliss like Krishnapaksha, but he has this moon of bliss, light, freedom already as a jivanmukta. All this is represented by the white path of knowledge or jnana or yoga.

You should not forget, Arjuna, the distinction between these two paths. If you allow yourself to yield to passions, to be slavish, to be dependent, to be subject to emotions and attachments of the world, remember you are drifting to the black path, to darkness. The highest point for attainment for you would be only the dim light of the moon. Love of swarga or any particular plane of existence, desire for its pleasures, desire for continuance as an individual being, whether in the worlds of gods or men can only lead to the black path of darkness, which makes you come back again and again to this world of miseries and sorrows. You may be religious, pious and full of devotion, but there is no help, you must return back to life, the individual life of infinite miseries.

The yogi who realizes this never allows himself to drift in the wrong channel. I earnestly impress upon you

therefore to follow the white path of knowledge, to throw your entire soul onto the path of yoga and you should be so entirely united with the yoga of knowledge as never to be for a moment away from it. Whatever there may be in the Vedas, in the performance of the various yajnas, in all the austerities that may be prescribed by the various religions, whatever may be the meritorious results of making virtuous gifts, he who realizes this knowledge of wisdom which I am teaching you, goes far, far above them all. The yogi alone who follows the white path of wisdom attains to the Absolute principle of self-existence, self-consciousness, all bliss and all peace.

DISCOURSE 8

Chapter 9: The Yoga of Sovereign Science and Sovereign Secret

I shall just reveal to you the subtlest principle of metaphysics, the knowledge of which is sure to relieve you from all evils. This knowledge or science is the sovereign science. It drives off all impurities, cuts asunder all limitations. It is a matter of direct perception and is calculated to give happiness in practice. Those who do not put faith in the dharma or religion that is being revealed here can never reach Me. They come back again and again to this world of death and miseries. Realize this point completely that My Being which is Absolute Consciousness is ever beyond objective perception, and therefore whatever comes within objective perception is not My Being, is not real but only apparent. The one principle that is real as underlying the entire universe of apparent beings must be that which can never be an object of perception. For whatever you perceive can have no being of itself, independent of your perception. Thus the principle of Absolute Consciousness whose existence cannot be denied, it being assumed as a condition necessary for all existence, must be necessarily beyond perception. The world of beings lying in perception are all of them dependent upon My Being of Absolute Consciousness.

Thus they cannot be without Me. I make their existence possible. Absolute consciousness or existence does not depend upon them for its be-ness. From the standpoint of the Absolute, they are nothing but its own identical self. So I, as the Absolute cannot be in them, for they are to Me nothing other than Myself. But they cannot be without Me as they are only modified aspects of My Absolute Consciousness and in the absence of the essence, whose modifications they are, they must cease to be. The particular forms in which gold exists cannot be without the existence of gold, but gold may exist in itself even when a particular form of ornament, for example a bracelet, is removed.

The consciousness of an individual assumes innumerable forms in dream. The entire world of beings in dream depends for its existence on the consciousness of the dreamer. The existence of the dreamer-consciousness is a condition necessary for the possibility of the beings of the dream-world. But the beings of the dream are not necessary for the existence of the dreamer. Many such dream-worlds vanish leaving the dreamer-consciousness intact. The question is: what is the reality in dream? What is the underlying basis? The answer is clear: The consciousness of the individual subject in sleep standing behind is projecting out of itself the phenomena of the dream-world. All the dream-world lies in this consciousness, but this consciousness does not lie in this dream-world. It stands as the hidden underlying principle of all, but no amount of search among the objects of the dream-world can lead to its discovery. It can never be an object of perception to the beings that arise out of it in dream.

The only way to find it out, if the beings of the dream-world want to do so, would be not by trying to find it in the world of objective perception, but by an attempt to awaken and develop their consciousness to the point of wakeful consciousness by means of meditation, concentration and withdrawing their attention from the objects that surround them, by realization that the objects are unreal. Whenever

unpleasant dreams are dreamt, the dreamer tries to awaken, tries to get back some condition of consciousness which may set him free from the unpleasant dream. Then he wills to be free and begins to faintly remember that he is in sleep and dreaming, and desires strongly that he may be awakened somehow or other to get rid of the dream. Thus by the help of vairagya or disgust from the dream-world and jnana that he is in dream and not in reality, he succeeds in awakening himself in a short time.

So it is essential, in order to arrive at the truth and to awaken from this dream of the present wakeful world, to realize that all this world of beings is only a modification and merely an apparent modification of My Absolute Consciousness, and so this whole world lies in Me and not I in them. The ignorant people regard the self as located in a body and even the Highest Self, the Divine Being, as located in some portion of this vast universe. The real truth is, which must be realized by constant practice and meditation, that the individual self is not in the body nor the universal in any higher plane of the universe. The individual is absolutely one with Me, the universal. Realize this, repeat this constantly in your mind for the sake of realization until it becomes quite assimilated with your nature: I am not in the body but the body is in Me, I am not in the universe but the universe is in Me. I am not human but divine. My divine nature is wonderful. It is not in the world of beings rather It supports the world of beings. The world of beings arises out of Its location. O, what a world of illusion has taken possession of me, that I, being beyond the world of perception, have been regarding myself as one of the beings of this world, subject to all the miseries that limited being or existence is necessarily subject to.

The world of ignorant people does not realize this subtle principle of My divine nature and falls into the veil of miseries and wretchedness. The evolution of this world of beings and their dissolution in Me takes place in accordance with the assertions of My Self-consciousness in alternation.

Again and again the world of beings arises as if in dream and then merges back in Me. This cannot be helped. I cannot stultify My own nature and cease to be Self-conscious. But bear in mind that these actions of evolution and involution or dissolution do not affect Me in the least. I ever remain indifferent, desiring nothing, fearing nothing, and I neither gain anything by evolution, nor lose anything by dissolution. I realize them as false appearances arising on account of the action and interaction of the necessary elements of My Self-consciousness the 'I am Myself'. The movements of the air cannot bring about any change in the all-pervading *akasha* or space around. The movements of the objects of the dream-world cannot affect any change or modification in the consciousness lying behind, so the movements of evolution and dissolution cannot and do not affect Me in the least. I simply see Myself, know Myself and realize Myself by My inherent energy. As an indirect consequence of My seeing and realizing, the world of beings arises into being and goes out of being.

What is that to Me, the Absolute and the Infinite Consciousness absorbed in the infinite bliss of self-realization! The ignorant look only to My human form and so look down upon Me. I ask you, Arjuna, to realize My real nature and thus save yourself from the condition of asuras and rakshasas who, being subject to illusion, are after fruitless and futile aspirations, futile activities and futile knowledge. They seek to have self-satisfaction through the false enjoyments of this world. Do not be like them. Realize yourself and, like great souls or mahatmas, through the help of your higher nature come unto Me. Be devoted to Me, realizing Me as the ultimate source of your being and of the entire universe. At the same time you must not forget that your real being is My Being, and is ever pure and unaffected, unlimited, unconditioned, infinite and Absolute avyayam (slokas 1–13).

The great ones or the *mahatmas* always think upon Me and explain My nature to others, directing all the efforts they are capable of towards becoming one with Me. They follow

either the path of devotion or the path of knowledge. Those who follow the path of devotion worship the manifestations that I assume from time to time as avatars and try to carry on the work of protection of righteousness, spread of knowledge or *jnana* which is the chief object of My *avatar* or manifestation.

The followers of the path of knowledge devote themselves to Me as one universal substance appearing in so many objective manifestations. I am the *yajna*, I am the offering, I am the mantra, the material that is offered in the fire and the fire itself, I am the Father and the Mother of the entire universe. My essence lies as the seed in the inmost core of every being and it is that seed which develops and evolves in the course of time into my full divine nature. I am the syllable *Om*, the four Vedas are my manifestation, the universe proceeds from Me and again dissolves into Me. I am immortality itself. I am also death as it is only the negative aspect of Me, My shadow as it were.

You have to bear in mind that death is nothing real or substantial. It has no true existence. It is only a form of change. Whenever a thing assumes a different form from what it had before, the previous form is said to die. But the thing itself, the underlying principle does not die or cease to be. The form of life that ceases to be at one particular moment may be said to be subject to death, but the root or the cause behind, that had given rise to the particular form, gives rise to another form. Thus the same substance or entity exists under the cover of quite a different form.

The reason why form exists at all is that the entity or the substance underlying all formal existence has the inherent nature in it, of suppressing or projecting out of itself an objective form in its course of expressing its self-consciousness which it cannot help doing. As this form is due to the objective activity of the underlying principle, the ever-self-conscious-becoming principle, it cannot be permanent, for the activity that gives rise to it cannot, from its very nature, be permanent but is ever endlessly recurring

or alternating. The recurrence or alternation is due to this that the activity is double-faced. It is both objective and subjective. It is in the nature of pulsation rhythmically rising or falling, or exactly like the pranic activities. This rhythmic rise and fall of the activity of the underlying absolute principle, or its objective and subjective currents, leads to the rise of one form when the objective current predominates, the decline and fall of that form with the setting in of the opposite current in relation to that form, and again the rise of another form with the return of the objective current.

This rise of form and its fall is known as birth and death in connection with living beings. The absolute principle underlying the rise and fall of forms remains in its own nature unaffected, for the currents that give rise to the forms are realized by it as moments and pulsations of its own life, and thus they are summed up in it as one entire Absolute Self-consciousness. Along with this Absolute Self-consciousness the rise and fall of forms give rise to an illusory aspect of the Absolute Consciousness as a finite consciousness in relation to the forms themselves being devoted to the objective current more than to the subjective.

This finite aspect of the Absolute Consciousness which is devoted to the objective current is known as 'chit' or 'ahamkara' or 'jivatma'. Another finite aspect or this very finite aspect when the current becomes subjective, becomes devoted to that current and that is known as *sattwa*. Both these aspects are unreal and have only temporary existence as finite aspects. They are in their own real nature nothing but the Absolute Consciousness itself appearing as finite on account of the one-sided devotion to the particular objective and subjective currents. Their appearing as finite for the time being cannot be helped, but with the dawn of knowledge, which lies potentially hidden within them, the one-sided devotion can be given up. Thus the finiteness may be suppressed and the life of the Absolute Consciousness with both the currents harmonized and ultimately unified to give expression to one universal life of perfect peace.

The chit or the aspect that is devoted to the objective side is necessarily miserable, as the object of its devotion, the objective forms are necessarily perishable. So its life is always full of wants, sorrows, misfortunes and disappointments; and it is always subject to desire, jealousy, anger and hatred.

The sattwa that is devoted to the subjective current is comparatively happier, as it is not attached to the forms and therefore does not mind whether they remain or perish. The subjective side is rather formless and therefore there is very little to be lost and to grieve for. But as long as the current on the subjective side does not reach the Absolute point, there is more or less of form and more or less of misery. The more of form, the more of change, and thus there must be more of death, and consequently more of misery. The root cause is devotion to the objective current. This must be checked by awakening the devotion to the subjective current and that also has to be given up when the life of the Absolute is realized. Thus death is nothing but the name of the appearance of one form ceasing to be for the time being or being suppressed for the time being only to be succeeded by the emerging of another form, just as one form or *sharira* is suppressed in sleep and another form or *sharira* emerges in dream. The suppression of one form does not lead to the cessation of all form-creating or *sharira*-assuming tendency or energy of the *ahamkara* devoted to the objective side. The assumption of objective forms or *shariras* is the root of all miseries. Unless this tendency to create forms and to live in them, the tendency to live for enjoyment, is overcome, the perfect peace, the calm happiness, the *shanti* or the *ananda* of the Absolute Consciousness cannot be realized.

It is difficult to understand, Arjuna, what real happiness is. Devotion to the objective current which necessarily arises in the beginning in relation to the finite aspect which is a reflection, as it were, of the Absolute Consciousness leads to the illusion of *moha*, that the world of forms corresponding to the various senses can give us real happiness and true satisfaction. You fail to see that the forms do not give you

any satisfaction at all, but the happiness that they do seem to give is due not to them but to their suppression to a certain extent whatever the cause might be. For instance, if there is a form, sound, colour or smell which can on account of its attractiveness keep at least one sense imprisoned and inactive for the time being, the sensual nature at the point where pleasure is perceived has its activity suppressed to some extent. That is why the existence which was miserable on account of being devoted to the objective side is lifted up, as it were, from the region of objective form-fullness into the region of abstraction, as it were, the region of subjective, comparatively speaking, formlessness. That is why in intoxication, when the existence of the individual is hurled, as it were, into a comparatively speaking formless sphere and relatively less objective surroundings, there arises some sort of pleasure. That is why again, in sleep where there is no objective form-world the existence of the individual becomes happier and pleasurable.

There is no happiness in form, as form is always objective and therefore always distracting and disturbing, and creating a wide gulf between the chit and the Absolute life behind. The concrete form can never give satisfaction. You must seek it in the region of formlessness, in the region of abstract thought or consciousness. Don't be subject to the delusion that you can have true happiness from the world of senses or the world of forms. Think deeply upon the point and trace the root of happiness. It is inherent in the nature of Absolute Consciousness. If you get it anywhere else, you do not get it really as it is but only shadows of it, momentary glimpses of it when your sensual nature is benumbed, suppressed or deadened for the time being; so you get only negative happiness. In sleep too, you do not get happiness itself, you get it only negatively owing to absence of forms, which leads to absence of pain. Real, positive, conscious happiness which is your real inmost self, you unfortunately have never tasted. You have given up your own real heritage and you are hankering after the mirage like sorrowful shades of death in

the foolish hope that they will enable you to quench your thirst for true happiness.

Look at the sad spectacle of learned men having studied the vedic lore devoted to the world of forms engaged in the performance of yajnas and making offerings of soma to Me in order to attain swarga. They fail to realize that swarga itself is a world of forms and subject to destruction, decay and misery in the same way as the present world. There the sensual enjoyments are more refined no doubt, but they are as much calculated to lead you astray from the true source of happiness, your own Absolute Self, as the objects of this world. All these worshippers of Me, who perform yajnas and are devoted to the form side, find themselves after a time hurled down to this world of miseries and death from the heights of the swarga loka. Thus the followers of the karma kanda of the Vedas remain deprived of the true solace, the true peace that is the lot of those who spurn aside the world of forms and devote themselves to Me, to the Me, the Absolute Self, withdrawing their minds from all else beside.

These devotees of My real Me get the adjustments of their circumstances, their faculties, their inward existence accomplished by Me. The root of harmony, the root of safety lies in Me, the Absolute Self. Those who run outside after the fleeting and transitory forms get their existence unhinged, their faculties out of order, their surroundings and circumstances thrown into confusion. They have lost sight of the right principle, the pivot upon which the whole world moves. Devotion to Me alone is necessary to bring about the true adjustment that is calculated to set you on the right path to attain self-realization. Do not be anxious about your worldly affairs and circumstances. Perhaps in your present ignorant condition you do not know how they should be ordered in order to help you to attain the goal. Leave them to Me, concentrate your efforts only in the direction of attaining the Absolute Self by knowledge and earnest devotion. All else of the world, all the circumstances cannot but place themselves in order and be subservient to the one

central purpose you have in view. Do not judge things by their outward appearances.

What seem to be misfortunes are your real benefactors in disguise. There is no real good in this world except the attainment of true knowledge, and that is a thing which is entirely in your own hands. To one with sincere and earnest devotion to knowledge, I, the Absolute Self, am ever ready to serve with *yoga kshema*, true adjustments of means towards the attainment of ends that might be necessary for each individual. The people who do not realize this are carried away by numerous desires to numerous pursuits and they devote themselves to various finite gods in order to attain to the fulfilment of their desires. They are also coming after Me but by the wrong path. They fail to understand that I, the Absolute Self, am the only principle of happiness, the only principle of harmony and adjustment, and so devotion to Me alone is calculated to bring about the fulfilment of all desires. The followers of the gods go after death to the region of finite deities. The followers of pitris go to the region of their own lords. But alas! They discover late that they have been devoting themselves to shadows instead of realities.

Those, who devote themselves to Me only attain true salvation. So, Arjuna, you should be solely devoted to Me, your Inmost Absolute Self, and place all your activities at my disposal. Undertake nothing unless it is approved of by your inmost spirit at a moment of calm repose and desire nothing to follow therefrom as consequences to yourself, as you have only acted in order to carry out the behests of your own inward nature for your own inward satisfaction and nothing more. Thus you will gradually obtain absolute freedom. I am really equal to all. I hate none. I love none. But those who are devoted to Me do come to reside in Me and I cannot help residing in them. That is the result which must follow on account of the mutuality of the law of action and reaction. Each time you try to throw yourself into the Absolute Self underlying your existence, there arises a wave from the inmost depths of the Absolute to embrace you within its bosom.

Thus there happens to be mutual action and reaction. You alone as the finite self do not act; as you increase your force. My force also increases and in the course of time My force becomes strong enough to overcome all obstacles. My devotee is dragged, irresistibly dragged, to become absolutely one with Me. Never mind if the individual who is going to devote himself to Me is a sinner, a heinous sinner. Devotion to Me, earnest endeavour to acquire My knowledge, sincere efforts to withdraw oneself from the world of forms, constant work to understand My teachings and follow them are calculated to save him from all sins, however great the sinner. You can go out into the world, Arjuna, and proclaim to everyone however low he might be, however sinful he might be, a shudra, a chandal, or anyone at the lowest scale of civilization, that there is no fear for him if he devotes himself to Me and to My teachings. Tell them that sincere efforts on their part, earnestness in them will awaken forces in Me, who is their indwelling spirit, forces that can destroy infinite sins in them and purify them of all impurities. Deliver this message to all of humanity laden with the weight of sins and sorrows. Do not be attached to this world of miseries and perishable forms.

An unfortunate circumstance, however necessary it might be, an ignorance, an illusion has brought you to the present position. But the situation is not hopeless, the saviour, the Absolute Lord is within you. Earnest devotion is wanted. Give up the world, care not for its objects. Don't take thought of how you will be maintained and supported. Devote yourself to Me. Always remain concentrating yourself and meditating upon Me, acquiring My knowledge, assimilating My teachings, acting up to My dictates as revealed within your inmost self, regarding this entire world before you as nothing but a shadow of My own real substantial existence. If you be thus devoted to Me, never mind your past, your future is assured. You cannot but attain Me, the Absolute Self, the Infinite Unconditioned Consciousness.

DISCOURSE 9

Chapter 10: The Yoga of Divine Manifestation

Listen to Me again, Arjuna, I am going to explain to you the mysteries of My nature, as you are an earnest and devoted student of the science of absolute life. The real nature of My existence is necessarily hidden from the view of all God-sent rishis as they have all proceeded from Me. Therefore, as long as they allow the current of consciousness in them to rush on towards the objective side of life, the objective world outside, My Being, the source of all standing behind the current, remains concealed. Nothing lying outside in the region of the seen and the known can ever reveal Me, the unborn and the beginningless. Beware, My beloved Arjuna, never take anything that you can see here or apprehend by any of your senses to be Myself. Men in their foolishness take the seen for the seer, the known for the knower and thus run after the perishable appearances that the energy assumes as real objects of worship and devotion. That is not the way to be liberated from sin.

The real Lord of all, the source of all beings is not outside but inside; not before the senses but behind them. As long as your mind keeps working outside, it can never reach the eternal essence of all, My real Me. The root of all sinfulness lies in objective attachment or attachment to objects that can be grasped by the senses, be they the objects of this world or

objects of higher worlds, forms of gods or men. Attachment to the form-side of existence creates the desire for that which is not-Self, which must be perishable and changing from its very nature. This desire forges fetters for the bondage of the self; the fetters though false create a sense of bondage and limitation for as long as the ignorance giving rise to them is not destroyed. Thus the only way to get rid of all-sinfulness, *sarvapaapa*, is to rid yourself of attachment to forms.

You can do this if you constantly meditate upon the utter worthlessness and extreme dangers of all forms. The poison of objectifying the inward consciousness and making it finite and limited lies hidden in all of them. As long as, for instance, in deep sleep there is no form, there is no desire and no limitation. But as soon as some form appears in dream, the sleep consciousness becomes individualized and conditioned and begins to experience the limitations and miseries of individualized finite existence. There may be higher and nobler forms and it may be necessary to transfer our devotion from the lower to the higher forms.

You must always realize that you have to extricate yourself from attachment to all forms whatsoever, and therefore you have to impress well upon your mind that forms as such are always poisonous and attachment or devotion to them cannot but be sinful. Never commit the error of identifying Me, the Absolute Existence, with the phenomenal forms of My Being, whatever they may be – *buddhi* or discrimination, knowledge, *jnana*, wisdom, forgiveness, truth, self-control, calmness, pleasure, pain, being, non-being, fear, harmlessness, fearlessness, etc. – are all mere apparent forms of My Being. They all proceed from the Absolute Consciousness by the working of the laws of evolution as explained elsewhere. They are not to be taken to be My own Self.

Neither good nor evil represent My real Being. Good is nearer to the Absolute than evil, as you cannot reach the Absolute except through good. But the Absolute in itself can neither be good nor evil. It is above both, transcending both in its real essential nature. It is never in relation, though all

relations or the pair of opposites owe their existence to it. For if it were not, then to realize or even realizing its existence to itself in its own self-consciousness and thus living its own life of infinite bliss and peace, there would be no manifestation of the consciousness of 'I am Myself', no manifestation of the differentiation of the 'Myself' factor and no universe at all containing good and evil, pleasure and pain. So realize Me as the Absolute root or source of all but still apart from all, unaffected and unconditioned, never really going out of My own supremely blissful existence, beyond all limitation of time and space. The forms though projected by My own thought energy or *maya* remain only floating over the surface of My Being; never touching it in the least. Remember, O, weary and sin-burdened souls! The refuge from all pains is in Me, the Absolute underlying the forms, and not the forms themselves floating before your senses.

The seven great rishis representing the seven subjective existences on the 'I'-side commencing from the chit or in other words the I-side of chit, manas and the five tanmatras and the four higher rishis representing the I-side of Purusha or the 'I and Myself' in its subjective aspect unmanifest; the Prakriti, the 'Am Myself' in the act of manifestation, the *ahamkara* or the 'I' of the 'I am Myself', the universal 'I' standing out as the self-conscious, root of all phenomena; the buddhi or the 'I am', the assertion of universal 'I' in self-discrimination and self-consciousness; and the manas or the types of man at the various stages of evolution: all these are productions of my mental modifications and they have in their turn produced the beings of the universe.

He who understands this law of production of these beings and the principles the *ahamkara*, buddhi, etc., as explained in the 'Philosophy of Evolution' acquires the perfection of yoga, which is never perturbed. Through that yoga he certainly attains the eternal union with the Absolute Existence which is My Being. What has to be realized not merely in words or belief but in actual meditative contemplation is this: that I am the source of all existence.

When you can in thought trace the existence of the universe, the various objects of the universe: the objects of the senses, the sensations of sound, taste, smell etc., from the Self-consciousness or 'I am Myself' of the Absolute, then you will be in a position to understand My real nature and be devoted to Me with a correct conception of My Being.

You will be able to dive to the innermost depths of your being where the infinite consciousness lies in its infinite bliss, your mind, your heart, your whole life would then be centred in Me. You will have no pleasure but either in absorbed contemplation of Me or when living upon the superficial plane of finite existence in explaining Me to others and discoursing about Me. So the life that My devotee should adopt must be to spend his time in contemplation upon Me and in discoursing about Me to others. To those who thus devote themselves constantly to Me, devoting all their energies to the understanding of the philosophy of My Being and have all their love centred in Me their inmost Self, I give or grant the wisdom which carries them back to My real Being.

The real revelation of My nature cannot come unless I rush in torrents into the heart of My devotees. I, as the Absolute Being, am ever ready there to enter into every one and reveal Myself. But the door of my entrance, alas, is always kept shut and locked up, and therefore My light does not enter and dispel the darkness within the recesses of your heart. Those who devote their energy and time towards understanding and explaining the laws of evolution and the mysteries of My Being, those who try to be one with Me in contemplation and loving devotion throw the gates open by the efforts of their love and devotion. I, in pure compassion for them, being seated in the innermost recesses of their Self, dispel the darkness of ignorance by the ever-luminous effulgent rays of the lamp of wisdom or knowledge.

So, Arjuna, distinguish well between what I am and what I am not, which is only a modification of My thought energy, a manifestation of My consciousness. Withdrawing yourself from what is mere manifestation, what is mere form, what is mere

objective, recede back gradually, enter into the depths of your being: the deepest depths from wakeful to dream, from dream to sleep, from sleep to what lies beyond all modification and manifestation to the Infinite and Absolute Bliss, the Absolute Consciousness, that I am and not what I am ordinarily supposed to be, the forms that keep you under subjection and throw you into the depths of infinite woes and miseries.

After this, Arjuna speaks: No doubt my Lord, you are the Absolute Brahman, the supreme support of all existence, absolutely pure from all evil, the all-pervading, eternal consciousness, the unborn and the eternal God. The rishis, the devarishis, Narada and Asita, Deval and Vyasa, all with one voice have declared you to be so and you also at this moment are telling me the same thing. I realize all this and I see that it is impossible for the devas or *danavas*, demons, who are turned towards the objective side of their existence to understand your real nature. Therefore, you alone know yourself and realize yourself as you really are. You are the underlying basis of all existence. The entire world of beings is mere modifications of the expression of your self-conscious existence. They exist as so many waves upon the infinite ocean of your eternal Self, conscious realization of your Self. Just as the waves are nothing but so many forms of water, so the innumerable beings are nothing but so many forms of the tanmatras with buddhi, ahamkara, chit and manas, which are in their turn nothing but wave-like modifications of your 'I am Myself' or expression of Self-consciousness. The whole world of appearance being nothing but forms of your Self-consciousness, You, My Lord, are really Bhutabhavan and Bhutesh. The whole universe appears to be nothing but the rolling waves of your infinite consciousness.

Your manifestations are innumerable. You are really infinite as unmanifest as free from all limitations. You are quantitatively infinite in manifestation, being impossible to come to an end to the manifest side of your life. The unmanifest, infinite in you at the root has produced a numerically-infinite manifested world of beings. You

should now explain to me your manifested glories, how you encompass the entire world of existence, how I am to contemplate you in this world of manifestation. You told me there are forms higher and lower. I have to withdraw myself from all forms altogether, but before I reach the point of absolute formlessness, I have to transfer my devotion from the lower to the higher forms. What are these higher forms in which I have to realize you in your manifested glorious existence? Explain to me your yoga and manifested glory yourself. These life-giving words that proceed from your lips have not yet satisfied me and I am still thirsty to drink the nectar of your speech.

The Blessed Lord speaks: My manifestations are really infinite as you say. The infinite at the bottom cannot be finite in manifestation. What is infinite in itself, in its transcendent unity becomes infinite in plurality, for the same infinite is seen through the spectacles of time and space and thus through the illusory spectacles of succession and extension. What is unity appears as plurality, as manifold, but the manifoldness is as limitless in manifestation as the unity is limitless in its unmanifest nature. What is changeless in itself appears changing in manifestation but being infinite at the bottom or root the changes never exhaust the substance, and so forms after forms appear to be succeeding without beginning and end. As long as you wear the illusory spectacles of time and space the Absolute must appear to Itself or yourself as an infinitely succeeding series of forms which never comes to an end nor would ever come to an end. The more important ones of these forms, which might be made use of by one who cannot liberate himself from the attachment to all forms, may here be pointed out. I am to be realized and meditated upon as the Self of all beings, the beginning, the middle and the end of all existence. If it be difficult to realize Me as the all-pervading Self of all beings, any of the forms detailed below may be chosen for that purpose.

Of the Adityas I am Vishnu, I am the sun of all light-producing beings. I am the moon of the Nakshatras, the

Samaveda of the Vedas, the Indra of the gods, the mind of the senses, the intelligence of all beings, the Rudra of the Shankaras, the Brihaspati of the priests, the Bhrigu of the Maharishis, the *Om* of all words, the japa of all forms of worship. I am the beginning, the middle and the end of evolution the *adhyatma vidya*, the science of self of all knowledge, the Gayatri of all mantras, Krishna of the Yadavas and Arjuna of the Pandavas, Vyasa of the munis and Shukra of the philosophers. I am silence of the secrets, and the wisdom of the wise. I am the seed of all existence. My Self-consciousness lies at the root of all formal existence. There is nothing in the world that can exist without Me. It is My seed, the seed of My Self-consciousness, transformed into various forms by the innumerable manifestations of the combinations of the 'I', 'Am' and 'Myself'; the sattwa, rajas and tamas; the primeval elements which lie at the root of all objective existence.

Therefore it is that all beings, however low in the locale of evolution they might be placed, having My Self-consciousness at the root, develop and evolve from where they are, throwing off the limitations one after another, unfolding the powers of consciousness in ever-ascending series of manifestations until they reach the infinite point of Absolute Consciousness. There can be no glory but a manifestation of the Self-consciousness of My Absolute Being. These are the two points lying at the extremities, the pure infinite Self-consciousness of the universal 'I' unaffected by the formal side of existence at the subjective end, and the mineral form of existence wherein the self-consciousness is submerged, as it were, in the objective form at the objective end.

The more self-conscious a being becomes, the more glorious he appears in manifestation. It is the development of self-consciousness which helps to overcome the limitations and obstacles that give rise to pain. The more you overcome the obstacles, the more you are self-conscious. The more you are able to control your senses and desires, the more you are true to yourself, independent self, unyielding to the

passions, unyielding to the hankerings of carnal senses. The more glorious you are, the more you express Me, the divinity that lies hidden in you. There is no glory but what is born of this expression of self-consciousness. The plant is more glorious than the mineral as being more self-conscious. The animal is more glorious than the plant as being still more self-conscious. The man is more glorious than the animal as being the most self-conscious of the three: the mineral, the plant and the animal. In man he is more glorious who is more self-conscious, more self-poised, self-restrained than others. Wherever you find gloriousness, excellence, goodness, realize that the glory, the excellence is due to the expression of My Self-consciousness which the particular being is manifesting on account of past development. So, worship the glory wherever you find it, not as belonging to a particular individual but as being the manifestation of the Absolute Self.

I, as the Absolute, am pervading through and through this entire world of existence. What is the good of dissipating your energies in these details of My manifestations. You should withdraw yourself from the unnecessary manifold details of the concrete and, entering into the inmost recesses of your being, realize Me as your own self, supporting the entire manifested universe by an insignificant portion of My energy, just as the sleeping self supports the world of dream by an infinitesimal portion of its thought energy. So your own inmost self is supporting this entire universe of existence.

I am in reality the essence of all manifestation, and realizing Me thus in my own real nature as the beginning, the middle and the end of all, realizing the entire universe as in substance and actuality nothing but My Self-consciousness, realizing that the world of forms has no existence as form but only as form of My consciousness, you will be free from the attachment that binds you to them. As the string of attachment will gradually get loosened, your self will begin to expand, to understand the principles that underlie the laws

of evolution. At the end, this so big, seeming universe will dwindle and shrink into the magnitude of an infinitesimal point before My Infinite Existence, which at present has seemingly shrunk into insignificance. The universe of the world which seems to be invincible with its temptations, desires, and ambitions will vanish and evaporate into nothingness appearing only to be an insignificant portion of My Self-consciousness.

This knowledge will give you absolute freedom. Real knowledge is knowledge of principles. The manifoldness of details is not for the man of knowledge but for the artist and craftsman. There can be no perfection of knowledge by finishing the details. It is useless and wearisome. Catch hold of the principles. Move from one less general to the more general till you reach the universal. Realize that the particular is only the universal under special conditions, special limitations; the particular and the universal are nothing but the moments of absolute existence. It is this absolute existence which has to be realized for absolute freedom and liberation. So leave the field of details, the region of the concrete, the region of the forms. Come to the point of the universal, the region of the formlessness and there you will realize that this universe is nothing but Me, a portion of My Being.

Realizing this, you will attain the goal and be one with My Absolute Existence.

DISCOURSE 10

Chapter 11: Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Body

In Discourse 9, emphasis has been laid upon the point that the Absolute Self is the only true existence, supporting by its own consciousness the entire world of forms which floats over it like the waves over the surface of the sea. The world of forms, with the innumerable beings forming parts of it, is the one form, body or *śarīra* which is penetrated through and through by the life of the Absolute Self. The world of forms taken apart from the Absolute Consciousness appears to be made up of different entities, objects and substances existing apart from each other. But from the standpoint of the Absolute Consciousness which underlies all these forms, the entire universe appears to be one organism, controlled, regulated and governed by the Absolute Self standing behind.

The sleeping individual in the case of dream becomes manifested as a different individual having a separate individual organism, but in reality the entire world of dream having numerous forms within it is one organism, being an outcome of the consciousness of the dreaming self. Looked at from this standpoint, the self that underlies the world of dreams having its consciousness pervading through all the forms of the dream-world is one self with the body made up of the entire dream universe. This aspect of the Self, which directly maintains and upholds the world of forms

in dream, is said to be Vishwa or *vaishvanara*. Behind it is the aspect of the Self in whom the dream universe lies in its ideal aspect. The world of forms is still potentially hidden in the rudimentary ideas of tanmatras, buddhi, manas and ahamkara and the subtle indriyas, just as the world of dreams lies in an imperceptible form in its ideal aspect before it bursts forth into the visible, perceptible and actual phenomena of the dream universe. This is *taijasa*.

The third aspect of the Self is *prajna*, where the, 'I am Myself' of the Absolute Consciousness has not yet differentiated itself into ahamkara, buddhi, manas, etc., but is just on the point of going out in differentiation. It is the point where assertion would commence or has just commenced with the 'I' alone asserted but still in a weak, mild and vague form with the ahamkara lying potentially in seed form.

The fourth is the Absolute Itself beyond all manifestation, all self-assertion, the absolute perfection of bliss and peace.

Out of these four aspects, the first aspect of Vishwa or Virat, commencing from the objective side, is the one directly and immediately concerned in the maintenance of the world of forms. This is the god that can be made the object of visual perception. By visual, of course, the ordinary vision is not meant but the vision born of deep meditation upon the Vishwa aspect of the Absolute Self. It is the aspect which may be said to be the one soul, the universal soul of the entire universe, its ruler and regulator, as each body is ruled and regulated by the various individual aspects of this universal oversoul or Vishwa. It cannot be perceived by those people who look upon the universe of forms as something real existing by itself. It can only be perceived when the universe of forms is reduced into so many elementary factors of consciousness making up the ideal constitution of Vishwa, and manifesting out of the conscious energy of Vishwa into the present form. Then to perceive the Vishwa, or rather to perceive the universe, is to perceive the form or *roopa* of Lord Vishwa or Sri Krishna in His sense-perceptible form.

He who realizes this truth in his inner consciousness feels, when he sees the universe standing before him, that he is perceiving the body or form of Lord Vishwa Himself. His own body he takes to be a part of the body of Vishwa and the entire universe as the complete organism of the divine soul or Vishwa.

In one human body there may be innumerable cells – each though in itself manifesting a separate individual life – all taken together collectively under the influence of the laws emanating from the constitution of Vishwa, make up one organic individual life. In the same way, the innumerable lives in the entire universe, though each seeming to have an independent life of its own, really go to make up one complete divine organism of Vishwa. All the evils of the world, the selfishness, lust, anger, avarice, jealousy, etc., exist because this truth of the existence of Vishwa, the one universal Soul in whom all the individual souls live, move and have their being as His innumerable aspects just like ripples or waves on the sea, is not realized.

Therefore, it is not clearly perceived that the good of each lies in the good of all. The perception or the actual realization that the entire universe is one organic manifestation of Lord Vishwa is essential for further progress. As Arjuna has reached the point where this realization is possible, he asks or rather requests Lord Krishna to show him His Divine form which would be the form of the Vishwa aspect. But he is very modest in his request and therefore he says that if it be possible according to the development attained by him to be blessed with the actual realization of the Vishwaroopa then he may be granted his prayer.

The Lord replies, “Your eyes, the physical eyes, cannot perceive the form of Vishwa. They have got the inherent tendency in them to perceive things apart from each other and their power of vision at the same time is very limited. They came into existence when the energy of the Absolute Consciousness was going out towards objective manifestation (*prana chisvani*).”

So they necessarily objectify their perception and are incapable of perceiving the underlying principle which unifies and integrates the manifold of the universe into one organic whole. This vision therefore has to be discarded.

Just as these eyes are the results of the objective current of consciousness representing the physical perception point of the objectifying energy, so the subjective current becoming condensed and concentrated at the point of perception on the subjective side, gives rise to an inner vision. This vision directly perceives the subjective unity, the one underlying principle of life which gives unity to the variegated phenomena of the universe. This vision is attained by the force which proceeds from Me, the subjective centre of consciousness. When this force becomes concentrated at a point, it becomes the inner eye and perceives the form of the Vishwa and Vishwaroopa. You have attained the stage of development by undivided and sincere devotion in thought and meditation to the one absolute principle of life, My Real Being, and therefore, the subjective force of My consciousness working in you will just produce the inner eye which will enable you to perceive My universal form.

Just after this, the inner vision in Arjuna, born of meditation upon and devotion to the Absolute principle in its Vishwa aspect, revealed to Arjuna the entire universe as 'One Living Divine Being', with the innumerable faces, eyes and other organs of the innumerable beings composing it, as the hands, eyes, faces, etc. and other organs of one Universal Being. This vision makes Arjuna burst forth into a prayer which embodies the perceptions that appeared in his mind and his own mental condition due to those perceptions.

He says, "My entire inner consciousness is changed. Instead of perceiving the universe as made up of numerous different objects independent of each other, I see before me Your universal form in which the whole world of beings appears unified as in one organism. The rishis, the gods, the human beings, the animals, etc. all appear to be in Your one universal body as so many cells, realizing their

life and existence in Your universal form. The universe has ceased to be a congeries of dead atoms and molecules. It is a manifestation, now as I see it, of the universal life principle of Your Being. You, My Lord, are the eternal abode of the entire universe manifestation. You are the changeless, immutable, guardian of eternal dharma. You have no beginning, middle or end. You really are the living principle in all the forms of the entire universe. There is no end to this infinite form of Yours. It is infinite on every side of it."

After this as the mind of Arjuna was more concerned with the battle of the Mahabharata, the portion of Vishwaroopa wherein that battle was rooted, caught hold of his vision and he began to see the dreadful form of the universal Being, appearing to devour the world of beings that was congregated there.

As it was the first time that Arjuna had a plunge in the Vishwa consciousness and especially that portion of it which was connected with the dreadful war, he could not keep himself balanced and found his mental constitution giving way, his thoughts losing the thread of unity and his entire inner being confused and confounded.

In this condition of mind he implores the Lord to explain to him what He is. On being explained that the Lord, as revealed to him, was ready to swallow up the sinful world in order to preserve the law of righteousness, the eternal religion; the enemies of Arjuna were sure to be swallowed up by the waves of destructive forces that were proceeding from the Vishwa consciousness, as the transgression of the rules of eternal dharma had set up the forces lying deep within the bosom of Vishwa to restore the balance for the maintenance of the only path that leads to the realization of Absolute Life and Consciousness. On being explained all this by the Divine Teacher Himself, Arjuna again exclaims that he has perceived truth. He has understood the real nature of Lord Krishna and he addresses him thus:

You are the Absolute Consciousness. The entire universe resides in You. The gods and rishis are only Your

manifestations. There is no existence except Your own consciousness. The form that assumes the energy of the consciousness is infinite, and so the manifestations are infinite. I could not perceive all this before. I am glad to have been able to perceive this, but yet I am unable to stay longer in this state of consciousness. I am not used to it and so I find myself lost in these waves of consciousness that overwhelm my weak existence from all sides. Hence I implore you to allow me to go back to my former consciousness whence I could perceive Your limited form of a human being. This Vishwa form, this Anantaroopa with innumerable hands and feet, does not suit me any longer at present. So be pleased, My Lord, to reduce Your infinite form into the finite form of a human being.

The Lord replies: This form that has been shown to you Arjuna has been produced to your vision by the forces working within My subjective consciousness for a short moment. It is not easy to perceive this form. The mere recitation of the Vedas, the performance of the yajnas, the ascetic practices cannot enable anyone to have a perception of this Vishwa form. The only way to perceive this is to turn away, to withdraw from the form-side of the universe and to concentrate your entire and undivided attention to the inner absolute principle of My inner Being.

Thus only can I be known, seen, perceived, and then it becomes possible for one to enter into Me and to become one with Me. One who is thus devoted to the subjective life side, to the formless principle of consciousness, to the Absolute Self, he alone can be blessed with this vision of Vishwaroopa. Devote yourself to My work, the work of universal love; the work of defending the cause of righteousness. Have your mind withdrawn from the manifold objects of the universe and concentrated on the Absolute Consciousness residing within you as your inmost self. Being thus devoted to Me, free from all the attachments of the world, looking upon none as your foe but upon all as deserving of your love and benevolence, you will be able to attain Me and become one with Me.

DISCOURSE 11

Chapter 12: Bhakti Yoga

After having had a vision of the Vishwaroopa, the universal form of the Vishwa aspect of Absolute Consciousness, the Saguna Brahman, the question is put by Arjuna, “Who are the higher in yoga? Those who devote themselves to the Vishwa aspect of the Absolute with its manifestation of the entire universe as its form, dedicating themselves with all the energies they possess to Your service, as You have explained in the last two slokas of the last chapter; or those who give up the Saguna Brahman, the world of manifestations, altogether and concentrate their mind entirely on the fourth aspect, the Absolute and Infinite Consciousness itself?”

The Lord replies: Those who devote themselves to the fourth aspect, having controlled and restrained their senses, perceiving everywhere one universal consciousness as the only reality and then loving the entire world of beings as their own self, they become one with Me. They attain absolute identity with Me (*prapnuvanti mameva*) and therefore there can be no question whether they are higher or lower in yoga. They are not yogis but far above yogis – having reached the goal of all endeavours, having realized the Absolute Self and having become the Absolute Self themselves.

But it is not easy to reach the point of Absolute Consciousness all at once by those who are yet obsessed, as it were, with the idea that they are embodied finite beings

(*dehavat*). This idea that you have got a body and you are limited thereby is the stumbling block on the path of spiritual progress. This idea lies at the root of all desires, passions and other evils. As long as this idea persists, it is impossible to make the mind stay for any length of time in the conception of the Absolute Self. In order to get rid of this idea or at least to weaken it to such an extent as to make it absolutely harmless, it would be advisable to regard this body of ours as an integral part of the universal body of Lord Vishwa or Saguna Brahman. Thus to dedicate this body to the service of this Vishwaroopa, My manifested form, by placing all your energies and sacrificing yourself at the altar of righteousness by sincere and earnest devotion, to the manifested form of My Vishwa aspect by disinterested work actuated by universal love of all beings as My own self and My own manifestation. Such love and such work is calculated in due course to wear out the idea that what appears to be your body has a separate and independent existence, and yourself as limited by that body is a separate and finite being.

Thus the life of devotion dedicated to My Vishwaroopa, which you have just witnessed, by loving and sincere service to all beings, forms the basis of the highest of all yogas. It is capable of being followed by all, whatever the point of development attained by each individual might be. This is the path of divine love and devotion, *bhakti yoga*, which should be trodden by all humanity in order to be fit to tread the path of *jnana yoga* or absolute unity with the fourth aspect of Absolute Consciousness.

But the one essential condition of *bhakti yoga* is the perception that this entire universe is My manifestation alone. There is no other existence anywhere except Mine. There is no room for the baser passions of human nature, no room for anger, jealousy, lust, hatred, etc., only for universal reverence, universal love for all. Whatever might appear before you to be low, downtrodden, sinful and slothful should not excite your disgust. You should feel that Lord Vishwa is in the inmost core of that being, and that therefore it should

excite the feeling of love and reverence in you as being the temple of the universal Lord.

The present degraded condition must be the result of a low scale of development attained by that particular being. That is no reason why you should lose sight of the highest divinity lying within it in seed form, ready to unfold itself in the fullness of divine glory in due time. Never look with disdain on any creature. Wherever your eyes may rest, let them rest on Me, the inner life and soul of the manifested Vishwaroopa. Your own self should not be regarded as a separate entity with separate existence of its own. Look upon it as a mere wave in the ocean of divine existence. Whether looking within or without, perceive only My glorious Self, the Lord Vishwa, surging everywhere in waves of glorious manifestation. Thus you will attain *ananya yoga* or *ananya bhakti*, literally meaning 'devotion of otherlessness'.

Banish the idea of 'otherness' absolutely from your mind. There is no other or *ananya* anywhere except My Divine Self and manifestations. If you maintain yourself in this attitude of regarding the entire world of forms, including your own self, as only a manifestation of My Divine Self, you will find that the divine energies will overflow from the centre of Vishwa. They will drag you out of the mire of death and the ocean of worldliness and put you on the other shore of peace and tranquillity. Give no way to passiveness, indifference, inactivity and slothfulness. Take help of the active currents flowing from the centre of Vishwa and manifesting itself in the glorious universe standing before you. Let your mind (*mana*) and your reason (*buddhi*) rest in the centre of Vishwaroopa. You will find after due time that your own centre of existence has shifted itself and instead of resting in the finite, it now rests in the Infinite and you will find yourself one with My Infinite Being. If you find it difficult to let your manas and buddhi rest in Me in contemplation all along, have recourse to *abhyasa yoga*, or constant practice of bringing the mind repeatedly to the point of My Divine Self, by repetition of the divine word, *pranava*, and thinking upon

its significance, also by regulating and restraining the senses, the *pranas* and by the practice of the various *yogas*: *karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga*, etc.

If you find yourself not even equal to *abhyasa yoga* or constant practice of any one of the *yogas* regularly and systematically as required by the system of each *yoga* on account of *rajas* or the principle of fickle activity in your nature, take up some noble work, some work to help the cause of righteousness for the good of all and dedicate yourself to that (*matkarma paramah*); you know that (*matkarma*). My action is solely devoted towards maintaining the path of righteousness and suppressing unrighteousness, supporting the cause of the righteous, the noble and the good, and destroying the sinful, the wicked. It is devoted not for any selfish motive but for the good of all, as the only possible good for the absolute self-realization can be attained only through the path of righteousness.

If you are neither fit for *dhyana*, or complete concentration on My central Divine Being, or *jnana*, knowledge of Myself as the reality underlying the forms and manifestations, or for *abhyasa yoga* or constant and systematic practice of self-restraint, meditation and contemplation, then devote yourself to noble causes for the good of all, realizing that devotion to noble causes is the sincerest, the most loving and the most acceptable service of the Lord. If you thus work for Me, serve Me in serving humanity you are sure to attain perfection. *Jnana* or knowledge is higher than *abhyasa* or practice, and *dhyana* or contemplation of Absolute Consciousness in a condition of unity with the Absolute Self, is higher even than *jnana* or mere knowledge without realization.

The real point to be attained is renunciation of the fruits of action. People generally act because they desire the actions to produce some beneficial results for themselves. This hankering after fruits produces agitation in the universal consciousness. It disturbs the equilibrium of the inner condition of being and thus *shanti*, peace, leaves him forever.

Action for yourself thus robs you out of your inner peace. In order to restore this peace to its real position of supremacy, action for your own sake, for your own selfish interest has to be renounced. Never act for yourself alone – act always for the entire Vishwaroopa including yourself. Keep all your possessions, all your energies ever ready for the service of all humanity or all beings.

Do not desire the fruits for yourself alone. Your energies are not yours alone. They are the energies of Lord Vishwa running through your bodies as particular centres for their manifestation. Why should the fruits then come to you alone? Act in unity with the Lord Vishwa, availing of the energies of Lord Vishwa, and leave the fruits and consequences of your activities to Vishwa, the universal Self. Only then can the peace of your mind be restored to its eternal glory. If you are not fit for anything else, you must make yourself fit to give up what really does not belong to you, to give up the fruits of actions which are the results of the divine energies working through you. Even if you do this much that you never desire that your actions should bring about beneficial consequences for you, you will find that all others would of themselves – the abhyasa, the jnana, the dhyana, the devotion to My work (*mathkarmaparata*) – gradually come to you in due course of time. So the renunciation of fruits of actions may in one sense be said to be higher than all as it must necessarily bring forth all others when it is present and acted up to.

Thus the cardinal point of all this teaching is as follows: You should hate none, love all and have compassion for all. Never think anything to be yours and never regard yourself as a separate being having separate existence. Look upon pleasure and pain as ever the same, not calculated to modify you in the least. Be ever ready to forgive, considering that your enemies are such not because they have inherent hatred towards you, but because their undeveloped reason is unfit to have a grasp of the peculiar situation in which they are placed. Therefore, owing to blindness in respect

of the sight of reason they act inimically towards you. Pity them, compassionate them for their misfortune, but do not be angry with them. Kindly try if possible to bless them with wisdom, so that they may realize their position correctly in this world.

Have ever in your heart the sweet peace of contentment. Covet not the transitory and the evanescent things of the world. No amount of material enjoyment can give you true inward peace, which is real bliss. Restrain your senses; they are the most dangerous foes that you have to encounter. You will have real pleasure when your senses are restrained and kept under proper control. If you let them run riot there is nothing but the veil of miseries and sorrows for your pitiable self. Be firm in your conviction. Be not wavering and fickle-minded, doing your work by fits and starts. Firmness (*dridhanishchayata*) of conviction, steadfastness of resolve are the conditions sine qua non of success. In all undertakings you should dedicate your manas and buddhi entirely to Me. Bear in mind that he who lives in this world in such a way that the world is not afraid of him nor is he afraid of the world, whose dealings are always friendly with others, and who is not subject to the fits of joy, anger and fear, lives really a happy life and is ever dear to Me.

You should be free from wants, pure in body, mind and action, and free from passions. Your mind should be so firm and strong that it should not get ruffled by the ups and downs of life. You should neither be attached to anyone, though loving all, nor should you hate anyone. Be not subject to anxieties and desires for worldly objects. Look upon your friend and foe alike. Realize well that men in general have not unfortunately attained the stage of development where they could realize the truth of the oneness of the self in all. Therefore, true love, love in the real sense of the term, is very scarce in this world; not because men are inherently wicked but because they are ignorant. So do not expect love in return for your love. If there is reciprocity, so much the better; if not, put it to

ignorance and pity those who have no true love in their hearts. You should have in your turn, therefore, only a loving, friendly attitude for all, be they your friends or foes.

Remain undisturbed amidst all sorts of misfortunes whether physical or mental. Care not for praise or blame. They are empty whispers on the lips of people who can hardly understand the depth of your benevolent and loving nature. Realize that the Inmost Absolute Self, which is the goal of your endeavours, is far beyond the comprehension of ordinary humanity. Therefore, any praise or blame that they might bestow on you must in the majority of cases be based on an erroneous appreciation of what you are. So heed not these empty words. Be ever devoted to the one object: the realization of the Divine Self before you. Be firmly fixed in your resolve and work out your salvation. Realize your liberation and acquire absolute freedom by persistence and perseverance in your path.

This sort of devotion is My bhakti, and if you have these principles firmly rooted in your character, you will be dear to Me as My devotee or *bhakta*. I have told you the essence of divine wisdom which gives immutability to those, who following this teaching of Mine, being devoted to Me as the Absolute Self of their inmost nature, become surpassingly dear to Me.

DISCOURSE 12

Chapter 13: The Yoga of Discrimination between Kshetra and the Knower of Kshetra

Arjuna asks what is prakriti and Purusha, kshetra and kshetrajna, and what is meant by jnana and jneyam. The Lord replies: This body, whether of the individual or the universe as the body of the universal, is said to be *kshetra*. The knower of the kshetra is said to be *kshetrajna*.

The entire field of objectivity on one side as the known and the subject or subjectivity sphere as the knower on the other are the two principles forming the basis of a school of philosophers at one time. They were represented later by the *Samkhya Pravachan Sutras* and still later by the Jain thinkers. According to them, the kshetra-side representing the material and the objective side was the basis of the world-evolution. It was quite different and distinct from the knower, the kshetrajna, which did not take part in the transformations that the kshetra principle underwent, keeping itself as a silent spectator of the entire phenomena of world evolution.

Salvation, according to them, was separation of the knower or kshetrajna from the kshetra principle by means of *viveka* or discrimination. They held that the kshetrajna principle was multiple in its nature, the knowers being many,

otherwise they thought it would not be possible to explain how some would be free while others would be bound. At the same time, they did not believe in any absolutely perfect principle lying at the root of all evolution and so their system was a godless and atheistic one. They were right insofar as they divided the phenomena of the universe for the sake of study into two parts: the objective and the subjective. But they failed when they did not see that the subjective knower, being consciousness itself, could not be finite and imperfect and so could not be multiple. The known or the objective side could not but be an element in the existence of the knower.

Thus the knower in its own nature, having the known within itself and being absolute and infinite, must be one eternal divine Being – the ultimate basis of the entire world manifestation. Our Lord Sri Krishna adopts their system so far as it is correct, but points out the shortcoming by declaring to Arjuna that the kshetrajna or the knower is not the individual soul or entity but is ‘My own Universal Self’. *Kshetrajnam champi mam viddhi* – “Know Me also to be kshetrajna”, thus introducing the idea that the individual knower is individual only insofar as it limits itself by objective longings and desires. Rising above that, it really is the universal, the infinite and the Absolute. Bhagavan also takes care to indicate that the kshetra of the objectivity is not a separate principle but a necessary element of ‘My own existence’, and so he says that a study and knowledge of both these principles, kshetra and kshetrajna, together constitute the knowledge of ‘My own true Self’.

This kshetra principle as the basis of world manifestation has been the subject of discourse by various rishis. The *Brahma Sutras* have also devoted themselves to an exposition of this principle. Sri Krishna enumerates here the principle as the: 1. mahabhootas, 2. ahamkara, 3. buddhi, 4. *avayakta*, the self-assertion, the ‘I am Myself’, 5. the five objects of sense or *tanmatras* (shabda, sparsha, roopa, rasa and gandha), 6. the ten senses with manas, 7. the principle of

desire and repulsion, and 8. pleasure and pain combination, intelligence and firmness. All these taken together may be grouped as the various elements which have been given birth to by the evolution of the objective principle.

In order to free oneself from the attachment to these transformations, one has to take help of *jnana* or knowledge, which can be attained by a life devoted to the cultivation of the following virtues: humility, unpretentiousness, benevolence, forgiveness, rectitude, living with the teacher for study, purity, steadfastness, self-control, non-attachment towards sensual objects, non-egoism; a constant and repeated thinking of the evils of worldly life that necessarily leads to birth, disease, old age and death; strong non-attachment to son, wife and other members of the household; constant balance of mind in the ups and downs of life; unflinching devotion to Me as your inmost universal Self based upon the strength of ananya yoga; resort to calm and sequestered places combined with an abhorrence of overcrowded spots; constant study of *adhyatma jnana* or knowledge of the ultimate principle, the Absolute subject, until it ends in the realization, the darshan of the Absolute Reality, the Infinite Self of all that is pure consciousness and bliss. This is *jnana* and the opposite of it is *ajnana* or ignorance. Whatever in the world or in your life you find militating against these principles consider that as ignorance leading to bondage and death.

Now I sum up in short what *jneya* is or what is the principle that will be realized by the life of *jnana* which has just been expounded.

The Absolute and eternal principle can neither be said to be *sat* or existing, nor *asat* or non-existing. Existingness implies particularity of mode in which existence has expressed itself in connection with a particular being. Such particularization cannot be predicated of the Absolute principle, for to particularize it is to limit it and make it finite, changeable and thus subject to destruction and death. The Absolute from Its own nature is above all relation,

affirmation or assertion and therefore you cannot call It either 'sat' or the opposite thereof 'asat'. It cannot be non-existing, for nothing can exist without Its existence. It is the necessary condition for all existence: the relative, the finite, the changing necessarily assumes as its basis the Absolute and the Infinite. You cannot conceive the changing, the relative, the finite without at the same time assuming at the background of your consciousness the Absolute, the Infinite, the unchanging.

It is the basis of all phenomenal changes, but itself remains changeless, unaffected by any modification whatsoever. It is pure consciousness and so giving rise everywhere to the sense of knowledge, the sense of action, the hands and the feet, the eyes and the ears. These senses are mere functions in which the consciousness, the Absolute Consciousness, manifests itself. The entire manifestation is merely formal, not bringing any change in the substance of the Absolute Itself – like the hands and the feet, the eyes and the ears which appear in dream without affecting in the least the consciousness behind that projects the dream phenomena. This Absolute Consciousness is without any senses but giving rise to the functions of all the senses and faculties by the mere self-assertion of its existence to itself. It supports the entire world phenomena without being attached to any one of them.

It is really *nirguna*, without any qualities, because qualities mean limitations. What is black cannot be white. What is red cannot at the same time be yellow. The possession of qualities also implies relation and at the same time it implies comparison. The Infinite and the Absolute Being is above relation and comparison. To predicate qualities of it would be to make it particular and individual, to make it only this and not all. The 'allness' of the Absolute precludes its possession of qualities. Though not possessing qualities itself, it has all the qualities lying latent within it, which manifest in accordance with the working of the laws of evolution. It is in and out of all beings, moveable and immoveable. Its

subtle nature makes it imperceptible and apparently distant, while being the real, Inmost Self of all it is the nearest of all. Though it appears to have become divided and manifold, it ever remains one and the same generating all, maintaining all and devouring all. It is self-luminous, revealing all by its energy of consciousness. It is absolute, infinite and unconditioned self, the only reality residing within all as the Inmost Self of all.

Thus I have explained to you the principle of kshetra, the principle of jnana and the principle of jneya. My followers understanding all this become one with Me.

The principle of prakriti and the principle of Purusha are aspects or sides of one eternal existence and thus they are both eternal. The prakriti is nothing but the first expression or assertion of the Absolute Consciousness on the objective side, just as Purusha is its assertion on the subjective side. They are thus both eternal elements in the life pulsations of the Absolute Consciousness. The prakriti is the objective side becoming the basis of all formal modifications; the Purusha is the subjective side becoming the cause of all phenomena manifesting sensations, intelligence and life. Purusha in its real nature is, as I have explained to you, ever absolutely free. It appears to be enjoying pleasure and pain due to transformations of prakriti, and it appears to undergo births and deaths simply on account of its attachment to the worldly objects, the modifications of prakriti. Free from this attachment it becomes one with the Absolute Self, the *Paramatma* which is the Absolute Maintainer, the Seer of the entire universe.

He, who thus realizes the principle of the Purusha subjectivity, the principle of the prakriti objectivity – activity and the principle of the Absolute the underlying reality of all – becomes free from birth and death in whatever condition he might have been placed by his past karmic samskaras. This Absolute Self has to be realized. It is the goal of life. Some attain it by the processes of concentration or *dhyana*, others follow the system of *Samkhya*, abstract thinking and

reasoning, others have recourse to the method of yoga shastra, others prefer to work out their salvation by the practice of karma yoga. Others again not understanding these things approach those who understand this reality and devote themselves to listening to the words of their teacher. Even these who are devoted listeners cross the ocean of miseries and conquer death.

The great fact has to be realized, whatever method may be adopted for the purpose, that there is the one Absolute Eternal Self, which underlies all but is never destroyed while all else is undergoing constant destruction. Realize this principle, Arjuna, and unify yourself with this principle. Realize all changeable activities as belonging to Prakriti and the Absolute Self as free from all change whatsoever. The most essential condition for the attainment of freedom is the perfect understanding of the philosophy of evolution by which it is perceived that all the diversities of existence really are reducible into one eternal principle, and thence it can be seen how step after step the *vistara* or the expansion of the universe takes place. He who understands this philosophy becomes the Absolute Self or Brahman at once. He is never afterwards contaminated or affected by the changes that seem to be undergoing in the body and in the universe. He remains free like the subtle akasha, realizing himself as the eternal, illuminating the entire world of existence by the rays of his eternal Self-consciousness. All these subtle distinctions between kshetra and kshetrajna, prakriti and Purusha, freedom and bondage, have to be grasped by the eyes of knowledge or wisdom. Those who acquire these eyes by constant efforts and persevering and untiring energy, attain the Absolute and the eternal bliss, the ultimate goal of all existence.

DISCOURSE 13

The Highest of All Knowledge

I will again expound to you the highest of all knowledge by the help of which the rishis have attained absolute perfection. Those who take refuge in this knowledge get themselves assimilated into My Being and remain unaffected by the process of evolution when the universe is projected out of My Being and when it is reabsorbed into it.

The eternal principle of activity in My consciousness, the principle of 'Am' or *Mahad Brahman*, acts as My female counterpart wherein the divine 'I', the male principle, deposits its seed energy. It is this seed deposit that becomes the root of the manifestation of all beings. Thus each being is at its root the seed of the divine principle of Absolute Consciousness and is therefore bound, if allowed freely to develop itself, to attain the absolute perfection of My Being. People generally do not realize this and therefore they do not attach sufficient importance to the inmost seed of divinity lying within themselves. They do not realize that what they have to do is to let this seed develop itself in accordance with its own laws, which are nothing but the expression of the divine nature without any imposition of restrictions from without.

The seed no doubt at the outset has to be protected from external injuries, from the storms of passion, carnal desires, sensual propensities, but so far as evolution of consciousness is concerned, the progress of thought is to be aimed at and the divine seed ought to be allowed the fullest

freedom possible. Let each being be told and told clearly and definitely that he is the son of God, having the potentiality of absolute divine perfection within himself. Tell no one that he is a sinner, born in sin and doomed to perdition. Let the truth be proclaimed to one and all, the high and the low, that he is in himself perfectly sinless, absolutely holy and, if he preserves the sense of self-respect that he owes to his inmost self – the God in becoming – he should keep himself aloof from low, sensual and evil surroundings. He will find in due course developing himself into God. Nothing has to be put into him from outside. Everything is within there; only freedom, liberty of development is wanted.

The divine seed is being crushed, as it were, under the weight of so-called religious, social and other kinds of tyrannies. As soon as the child is born, before he can think for himself, people begin to put into its mind pernicious ideas as to its being something else than divine, inherently sinful and unholy, needing the help of some external deity to extricate it from the difficult situation. The need of an external redeemer, an external saviour is being constantly dinned into its ears. He is taught to be submissive to external authorities, to be meek, lowly and submissive. He is never taught the innate holiness of his inmost self, never taught to look within himself for the highest illumination and guidance, never taught to revere himself as a Divine Being, never taught to hate sin and vice, casualities and sensualities as quite unbecoming, disgraceful to the Divine Being, that he really is. Socially too, restrictions are put upon the development of the divine seed by condemning large portions of humanity to occupy a position of disadvantage where he is not allowed full freedom of thought and action.

Once you realize that 'I', the Divine Being, am in all beings, you will begin to show reverence to each and all, to revere the child when he is born as an avatar of Mine. Though trying to protect it from external injuries, you would never have the impudence to look down upon the child and deprive it of the best training calculated to develop the possibilities of divinity

within by your discouraging modes of dealing with it. The whole secret of success in spiritual progress lies there. Think low of yourself, aim at low ideals and you come to nothing. You restrict the progressive spirit of the divine seed and you commit the most heinous sin that you are capable of.

My children are being murdered daily by unjust repressions, discouragement and insulting treatment. I am not speaking of the murder of the physical body but of the restrictions placed upon the spiritual growth of the divine seed, which brings about the stunted spiritual growth of My sons in humanity. This knowledge that I am expounding to you will enable you to see how far the world is going astray from the right path; and instead of trying to attain freedom it is putting bondage after bondage over itself, not realizing alas! that the number of bondages it has already got within itself is more than enough. The bondage that first came into existence was the bondage of *gunas* – *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas* – the differentiated factor of self-consciousness the ‘I’, the ‘Am’ and the ‘Myself’.

The ‘I’ standing as a differentiated factor is no doubt pure and illuminative. It helps the condition of knowledge, but this also produces a bondage because the consciousness becomes limited and finite, though the limitation is comparatively pleasurable.

The ‘Am’, as differentiated factor creates *raga* or attachment because it makes the limited consciousness think that ‘I am such and such a limited being’. Thence arises unquenchable thirst or desire for enjoyments, giving rise to endeavours and activities in the direction of self-enjoyment without end.

The objective factor of ‘Myself’ or *tamas* as differentiated produces identification with the objective side and thus puts a veil over the subjective, the ‘I’ or the *sattwa*. It binds the limited consciousness in forgetfulness, indolence and sleep, thus creating a thickly-coated covering for the light of knowledge which compels the individual in the condition of darkness to fall down into the pit of sin and miseries.

Appendices

The Theory of Evolution

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहंकार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥

Bhagavad Gita (7:4)

स आत्मानमेव वेद अहं ब्रह्मास्मि तेन तत्सर्वमभवत् – श्रुतिः

Shruti

एषस्व प्रतिबम्बस्यस्वयमालोकेनेच्छया

अत्यन्त निर्मेवाकराः स्वयंमुकुरतां गतः – योग वाशिष्ठ

Yoga Vasishtha

Our knowledge of the universe is always that of a series of experiences connected with each other in certain relations; the phenomena we see all around appear to be such only insofar as they are conceived to be related to each other. The question naturally arises as to what is the ultimate reality beyond these numerous relative appearances. Some have supposed it to be matter, some suppose it to be force, but, if we analyze the possible conception of matter or force, we find it impossible to conceive that the universe, or the totality of appearances which goes by that name, can ever be explained by supposing matter or force to be the underlying reality. The universe is ever related to a consciousness behind it, for all our perceptions, whether sense perceptions or mental perceptions, are conceptions, apprehensions

or cognitions; whatever they may be, they are always in a consciousness and for a consciousness.

Try however we will, we can never find ourselves apprehending a universe without at the same time apprehending it as related to a consciousness in which and for which it seems to be. To blot out the consciousness in relation to which a universe or phenomenal appearance is apprehended would be to blot out the universe itself with absolutely no trace of it whatever behind. To put matter, as it is ordinarily conceived, to be a certain entity having no consciousness in itself or being quite out of all relation to consciousness, would be to suppose that matter can exist, or to be more accurate, its existence can be conceived as quite independent of and out of all relation to consciousness. It would be absurd to suppose that we can have any conception of it, having our entire range of experience circumscribed within the limits of consciousness.

This implies a clear contradiction in our thought. Thus we are compelled to give up the idea of explaining the universe of our related experiences or the universe as it exists in our experience, by supposing matter as it is ordinarily conceived to be at the root of it, leaving aside the question of any universe which might be beyond our experience, which we can never speculate or think about. Moreover, matter of itself can never be sufficient to explain the entire series of related experiences known as the universe. For matter, supposed to be an extended something, must lie in space, and therefore must assume the existence of space in order to work itself out into the numerous worlds of phenomena we see all around.

It would at the same time necessitate the existence of force over and above it in order to put it into motion and thus enable it to assume the various forms that go by the name of 'universe'. So matter alone can never furnish a sufficient explanation and moreover, when it necessitates many things besides itself to bring about the world of experiences, it cannot be said to have an absolute existence.

It cannot be said to be capable of existing without space which it is not, without force which it is not, and without time which it is not. Its existence then depends upon various things outside it and clearly it cannot be said to exist in, of and by itself. If the others – the space, the time and the force – that are necessary for its existence, happen to go out of existence, it (matter) would cease to be.

Thus our attempt to explain the world experience by something which happens to be equally in relation and limitation hopelessly fails. We find ourselves reduced to the position that this matter, being in relation itself, needs an explanation for its own being and existence. Moreover, the point remains that conception of matter as well, being a conception, an idea or a notion, can never be conceived to be beyond all relation to a consciousness in which and for which alone it can be. Being conscious beings ourselves, we cannot step beyond the circumscribing limits of this consciousness and suppose the matter-conception to be outside it.

So whatever is contained within the world of our experience cannot but, from its very nature, be in relation to a consciousness in it and for it. Therefore, to try to explain this world of experience by something which is part and parcel of this world of experience, supposing it to be out of relation to consciousness, is futile and illogical. We have to take the world of experience as a whole, as existing in consciousness and for consciousness, and try to find an explanation for it if possible in something that lies beyond the world of experience but not out of relation to consciousness. No portion of the objective side of our experience can fulfil this condition. Whatever is experienced is related to a consciousness and cannot as such explain either the world of experiences or the consciousness this world is related to. It can have no existence per se, in itself, by itself, of itself and for itself, and therefore it would stand in need of an explanation itself.

Therefore, we have to give up all hope of explaining the universe by something which appears within the world

of our own experience. We must now turn to the other side, the consciousness itself, and try to see whether it can furnish an explanation for the world of experience that stands before us. This consciousness, being the necessary condition of the entire world of experience, must exist quite independent of that world. Certain conditions of experience have been supposed to exist independently of all experience by certain prominent thinkers of the world. They have supposed the world of experience as well to be possessed of certain elements, the things in themselves which appear as the material content of this world of experience, such as the sensations. It has also been supposed that the a priori conditions of experience – the time idea, the space idea and the causality idea – group these sensations in accordance with certain laws. It is thus that the pure reason, acting upon the material content with the aid of the above enumerated a priori forms or conditions of experience, evolves the world of experience as known to us.

The point here of importance is that the so-called things in themselves, the so-called material content of the world of experience, are supposed to exist out of all relation to the a priori forms or conditions of experience which cannot be said to be correct. The wonder is that the great thinker – who could rise above the dogmatic speculation of his predecessors and take a critical view of the situation, thus analytically separating the contents of our knowledge into what really is known or experienced and into what never enters into experience as an object of it, but is necessarily assumed as the a priori condition of all experience essentially necessary to make experience possible – could not perceive that, if no experience is possible out of all relation to the a priori conditions of it, there could be no things in themselves furnishing the material of experience, capable of coming into relation with experience and at the same time out of relation to those a priori conditions of experience.

Metaphysical speculation, however, makes progress very slow, and hence it is no unusual sight to find thinkers after

thinkers succumbing to those very weaknesses that they did their utmost to overcome, and did succeed in overcoming to a certain extent. The same thinker (Kant) also could not perceive that the a priori conditions themselves could not be independent and they needed a consciousness behind them, an ego-consciousness or egoistic consciousness to derive their mainstay and support therefrom. In fact, space-idea cannot be conceived of nor can time or causality idea be conceived of as existing apart from and independent of a consciousness in relation to which alone they can have their being.

This point was apprehended by his brilliant successors (Hegel and others) who did away with the things-in-themselves or the causes of the material content or the sensation of the world experience. They attempted to deduce the a priori conditions or forms of experience – the space-idea, the time-idea, and so on – from the consciousness or the notion by their own dialectic method. The error committed by them was to do away altogether with the sensations, the material content or the world of experience of Kant, the real material side, and only take up the form side, as it were, the a priori condition of experience, for their analysis and deduction from the consciousness or notion in relation to which alone they (the a priori conditions) have their being.

The real question before us is the explanation of the entire universe, including the so-called things in themselves of Kant, which as a matter of fact can have no being apart from the material content or the sense perceptions of the world of experience and the form side as well, the a priori condition of Kant and the still subtler a priori condition, which have been termed as the moments of the notion by Hegel and others. In order to explain all this we can have no other principle but the principle of consciousness alone, which is the condition of all experience whatever, subtle or gross, formal or material, and which alone can be said to exist of itself and in itself. This consciousness, being the ultimate condition of all experience, cannot itself appear as an object of experience, but must necessarily be assumed as

the necessary a priori condition of all experience and thus absolutely independent of and beyond all relation to, so far as its own existence is concerned, all experience whatsoever.

To be conscious or to be what it is, it must from its very nature assert its existence to itself and express itself to itself in self-consciousness as 'I am Myself'. We ought not to confound its expression of its existence to itself with its existence itself. For, although the expression is spontaneous, essential, necessary and incessant, the existence itself can never be measured by the expression of it. The expression must come of it, but as expression it cannot help being limited, conditioned, and in relation. Thus it can never be said to be a full, complete and perfect expression of the existence, the absolute Existence itself. Though necessarily limited and conditioned, its expression or assertion necessarily has to be, for without its being the consciousness would cease to be conscious of itself, to know itself, to realize itself and thus cease to be in itself.

So here we are confronted with this position that the consciousness standing out of all relation to the world of experience in its absolute nature, the *Para Brahman*, is really inexpressible, unrevealable, unmanifestable, but it is also necessarily from its very nature expressing itself, affirming itself and revealing itself to itself as Saguna Brahma or Brahma with maya or prakriti.

This expression of consciousness is the manifestation of it as self-consciousness or consciousness of itself, or consciousness of its own being. In thus asserting its existence to itself it expresses itself as 'I am Myself'.

The first element of this expression, the 'I', represents the subjective side of self-consciousness, or *sattwa*, that which becomes conscious, knows itself or realizes itself. The second factor, the 'am', represents the element of assertion, the affirmation and realization of the content of consciousness or *rajas*. The third factor, the 'Myself' or *tamas*, represents the objective side, the apprehension of the subject by itself through the affirmation of its existence

under the assumption of the objective form, wherein lies hidden the substantial identity of the subject 'I', with the object 'Myself', along with apparent formal differentiation of the subject with the object on account of the form which the conscious self-assertion of the absolute in the expression 'I am Myself' assumes. This formally-apparent and merely-seeming differentiation of the object with the subject lies at the root of all subsequent differentiations; and therefore it is that all differentiation remains forever only formally seeming and apparent.

The real principle of identity ever lies hidden at the basis of all differentiation and manifestation. This self-assertion of the absolute in self-consciousness on account of the differentiating activity which it gives rise to, breaks up the elements or factors of self-consciousness into three parts: the 'I', the 'am' and the 'Myself'. Thus the self-consciousness takes up each factor by itself, and concentrating itself thereupon brings out each element into prominence separately and then in relation with each other. Thus it weaves into a systematic whole the necessary implications of the essential elements of self-consciousness, the three factors mentioned above, and expressing them in explicit terms in order to complete the expression of self-consciousness as 'I am Myself'.

Thus the 'I' factor standing by itself does not remain as the 'I' alone; it necessarily expresses itself, asserts itself, as being, existing, as 'am' because the 'I' going into the 'am' becomes the 'I am', the principle of *buddhi*, the 'I' which comes out of representing the principle of *ahamkara* and 'I am Myself' (Myself being prakriti-tamas) lying behind it. This 'I am' cannot stop with the mere assertion of its existence. It proceeds further and defines that assertion, limits it, and makes it more concrete by giving it an objective turn and bringing it to the point where 'what it is' is expressed. Thus the 'I am' goes into the 'Myself' and becomes the 'I am Myself', the principle of the assertion of self-existence inclined towards, modified or tinged by ideal

objectivity, the principle of *chit*, or consciousness, defined, concretized and made into finite shape.

This finite is not the finite as ordinarily understood. It is the first finite manifestation arising out of the infinite consciousness of the Absolute, on account of the self-differentiating activity of the primeval 'I am myself' or the *moola prakriti*. Thus the present 'I am Myself' differs from the first 'I am my self' in being more defined, objectified and limited as it comes into being after the 'I' has asserted itself separately from the other factors, and then with the effect of that separate self-assertion has gone into the 'am'. This 'I am', thus concretized, has gone into the 'Myself', giving rise to the present 'I am Myself', the principle of *chit*. The 'I am Myself' of the *chit*, having become objectified by the my-selling of the 'Myself', tries to regain the subjective point by finding out, revealing or expressing what this whole 'I am Myself' is. As the self-differentiation proceeded or started from the 'I' factor, so the differentiation as set forth is dominated by the 'I-ness' of the 'I'. Hence the thought activity of the *prakriti* subjectifies the 'I am Myself' of the *chit* principle by taking in the entire content of *chit*-consciousness as the subject or the 'I', expressing it as the 'I am Myself', meaning that the 'I am Myself' is the 'I' or the subject at this point of its manifestation.

We must here bear in mind that the first 'I am Myself', the primeval *prakriti*, was made up of the purely apprehended 'I am Myself', thus throwing only a faint tremor of the finiteness over the infinite consciousness of the Absolute. The purely apprehended 'I am Myself' then has been broken up into separate elements and each element has been seen to go into the other giving rise to the three principles of *ahamkara*, *mahat* or *buddhi*, and *chit*. We now find the last placing itself under the first, the 'I', and becoming the 'I am Myself I', the subjectivity modified 'I am Myself', or the finite self-consciousness, so to say, which is represented by the principle of *manas*. This principle of self-consciousness or *manas*, having

within it differentiated elements of the subject – the ‘I’, the affirmation or assertion, the ‘am’, the object, the Myself – all put together into subjectivity, which ripens into the idea of the self, lying within all the elements of self-consciousness contained within it, distinct from each other. This principle of manas, contemplating upon itself as having within it several distinct principles, gradually develops the idea of within-ness inasmuch as the distinct principles, such as the buddhi or the mahat, the ahamkara, the chit be within the ‘I am Myself I’. At the same time it develops the idea of oneness or externality inasmuch as the principles lying within the manas or, more properly speaking, now at the present stage lying within the antahkarana, being distinct from each other, give rise to the idea of external-ness or externality, by the recognition of the fact that each of the principles lies outside the other, though inside manas itself.

This qualitative distinctness develops in due course by becoming more and more accentuated, defined, emphasized and concretized into quantitative distinctness or externality. The gradual development of the externality notion necessitates the passing and re-passing of the thought activity from the manas or the internal suppressed self, to the external other, and from these to the internal in succession, or even in passing over the different suppressed portions of the external in succession. This develops the root idea of time. The ‘I am Myself I’ of this point having become the ‘I’ of this stage asserts or affirms its existence as the ‘I am Myself I am’ by asserting the subjective principle of the manas. This assertion of the manas at this point takes place in the externality-notion that has been developed by the action and interaction of the qualitative distinctness of the different principles of antahkarana with the within-ness or the within-containing-ness of the whole, the antahkarana, in relation to those principles. The otherness of the principles inter se bestow the character of out-ness on the principles themselves amongst each other. The self-assertion of the

manas, or 'I am Myself I', now takes place in the already-developed externality notion.

Thus the existence of the manas at this point is realized as existence in extension, in stretching-forthness, in the without of the root idea of shabda. The idea of self-assertion or existence in externality, breaking forth into suggestion of externality-points in relation to or realized by the principle of manas standing behind, develops the root idea of *shabda* or externality-points. This root idea, becoming acute in the course of development, owing to the concentration of the objective current of consciousness in that direction, manifests as shabda known to us. The coexistence of these shabda-points or externality-points in aggregate, having the principles of 'am' at the basis in order to aggregate all the 'am' points, instead of the 'I' points in 'am Myself I am' develops the notion of space existing on all sides. As long as the 'I' remains at the basis, the subjectivity predominates. Therefore, the suggestions or externality-points remain merely as perceived or cognized suggestions, and the complete space idea remains unevolved. With the assertion of the 'am' factor, therefore, which takes place side by side but which we will have to take up later on, the subjectivity of the 'I' is pushed into the background. The assertive existence of the 'am' occupies the field in sufficient strength to make the externality-points group themselves systematically in coexistence. This notion with the subjective notion suppressed comes up as the space or *akasha* idea.

The assertion of the existence of the manas in externality again has to become defined, localized, (for what was qualification before, has to appear also as localization after the growing up of the externality notion) objectified, to come back to the subject in objective form or 'myselfied'. Thus the externality-points have to return back to the seemingly outer covering of antahkarana, this outer covering having been assumed in contradistinction to the externality idea that has recently grown up all around; which has now become the 'myself' of the manas; or more properly speaking, antahkarana

in relation to the 'I am Myself I am' of the shabda, as the 'I am myself I am Myself', giving rise to the root idea of touch, *sparsha*, which is generated by the coming in contact of the shabda-points, or suggested externality-points, with the newly-formed external fringe of the subjective antahkarana.

The *sparsha* idea, or the idea of externality-points touching the 'Myself' or the outer surface of the antahkarana, is taken in its totality and subjectified in externality, or the subjectified *sparsha* is projected or localized in externality, to appear as the root idea of form. The *sparsha* idea, or the idea of touch, was on the 'Myself' or the external being of the antahkarana (the I am Myself I am) becoming equal to 'I am Myself I am Myself'. In the next step this whole idea is taken under the subjective 'I' as 'I am Myself I am Myself I'. This conception of touch or *sparsha* at this stage enters within the being of the 'I am Myself I am Myself'.

Thus the sensation of form or *roopa*-idea gets within the organism of the being that has been evolved up to the stage of *sparsha*. As externality has already been evolved, this idea of touch or *sparsha*, though lying within, spreads itself also outside in externality and generates the idea of form or *roopa*. So, form is nothing but *sparsha* working within the being and projecting itself outside in externality. This subjectified *sparsha* then having gone into the root idea of form, asserts itself in existence or in 'am'. In this assertion it begins to make its existence felt where it is, that is, within the organism of the antahkarana; at the same time, keeping intact the suggestion that it exists outside in space as well, thus asserting or affirming its existence it occupies in consciousness a particular place, or becomes subjectively particularized. So the *sparsha* idea as *roopa* not only existing within the organism of the antahkarana, but also making its existence particularly asserted, felt and recognized, generates the root idea of *rasa* or taste.

The *rasa* idea in its turn goes out into objective particularization by projecting itself through the 'myself idea', and instead of making its existence felt within

the organism only, points to, indicates or suggests its particularized existence outside in the externality notion which is already there from before. Thus it is the root idea of *gandha* or smell, which has come into existence now, which marks the last objective point of evolution of the 'I' series. The evolving idea, the 'I', having come to the outermost limit of the 'Myself', where it is not only objectively localized or 'myselfied', as in the case of form idea, but it is also objectively particularized or objectively objectified or 'Myself itself' is 'myselfied. The 'I' being the commencing point and 'myself' the terminating point, when 'Myself' finishes itself as having 'myselfied' itself, the outward evolution must stop and so further objectification becomes impossible.

The only course now left for the evolving current would be to trace its course back to the point from which it started. For, in the course of the realization of self-consciousness, the object of consciousness has not only to be asserted as different from the subject, but it is also to be brought back to the subject as essentially and substantially identical with it, the so-called difference being left only to be formal and apparent. For if we suppose that the object of consciousness is to be ever kept as essentially different from the subject, it would have to be placed absolutely outside the sphere of the subject, the consciousness of the subject, beyond all connection therewith. The result would be that the object would cease to be object, its objectivity depending on its suitability to be connected with the subject within, its current of consciousness as its object. Therefore, it becomes essential for the object to be object, to be both identical with the subject as well as different. In order to be such, it has to be necessarily, substantively and essentially identical with the subject and apparently and formally different from that.

This position of the substantial identity and formal difference of the objective side with the subjective principle lies at the root of the principle of maya. It is found to be everywhere in the course of evolution, the objective side everywhere being substantially identical but formally

different from the subjective side. In the course of evolution at each stage we find the subject, the 'I', going out into the object, the 'Myself', through the self-assertion or affirmation of the 'am'. At the same time we find that after reaching the 'Myself point', it turns again towards the 'I', or the subject, developing itself gradually through its inward activity of the 'am' into realizing with the 'I', thus completing the circle of self-consciousness, the realization of its identity with the subjective principle, tending to cause the destruction of the posited formal difference between the 'I' and the 'Myself'. This results in the ultimate decay of the 'Myself' as the differentiated subject or of the object as object; of the limitation as the limitation; of the condition as the condition; leaving the subject absolutely free, existing in itself and of itself, the Absolute and Infinite.

The phenomena that we see all around us illustrates the principle we have just now stated. The assertion of the 'I' through the 'am' finds its expression in the assertion of the male principle through the female principle, the Purusha through the Prakriti, giving rise to the 'Myself' principle, to the principle of the Son, the jiva, which again begins to develop towards the subjective principle, the 'I'. When it succeeds in realizing it, a subjective independence at its maturity, it again asserts itself through its own 'am', or the female principle, to give rise to another 'Myself', or the principle of objectivity having potentially latent within itself all the possibilities that belong to the subjectified father, or the 'I' principle whence it proceeded.

In this way the evolution goes on from stage to stage, a new circle of existence or being coming into manifestation at each point or stage with latent possibilities of growth and development, ultimately realizing itself by the development of the possibilities into actualities, by the realization of its subjective fullness, independence and truth. At the same time, after the subject, the relatively-subjective point of the particular stage is reached, the objective principle of that stage gives way in the ordinary course to dissolution

and decay or death. Thus everywhere is to be met with the phenomena of birth, growth, ending in maturity, decay and death, which goes on incessantly until the inner centre of being succeeds in its upward course to realize itself as the Absolute and the Infinite.

We might here turn our attention to the fact that just as we have dealt with the 'I' series, we have to take into account the 'Am' series, which result on account of the predominance of the 'Am' principle, instead of the 'I' principle throughout the evolution of the entire 'I' series. These 'Am' series give rise to the manifestation of the universal forces or elements and, corresponding to the same series of the 'I', there arise the 'Myself' series with the principle of 'Myself' or objectively-conditioned existence predominating within them. Just as the assertion of the 'Am' in itself is indefinite, so the elements of the universal forces are universal and practically unlimited in their manifestation. The only limitation that they receive is due to the assertion of the 'Myself' principle which makes the assertion of the 'Am' take an objective turn by limiting itself, making itself finite as the seen, the felt, the known of the current of consciousness.

These 'Myself' series lie at the root of the individualized organisms, bodies, coverings or sheaths; the limited the objective, the conditioned, manifold forms of the 'Am' series at each stage. It is these that form the bodies of the *jivas* or the modifications of the 'I' series, which have as the medium of their existence and action, the 'Am' series or the universal elements. The 'Myself' series are the outcome of the conditioned or limited aspects of the universal elements or forces under the influence of the 'Myself' principle of the Self-consciousness of the Absolute. They go to make up the individualized bodies or *shariras* of the manifold manifestations of the 'I' (*ahamkara*) under the influence of the same 'Myself' standing as the *jivas* or the *rishis* behind those *shariras*, functioning through them in the universal medium through the universal forces and by the universal activities of the 'Am' series or the *devas*.

The 'Myself' series also divide themselves into nine stages, corresponding to the nine stages of the 'I' series, giving rise to the nine lokas, each loka being presided over by the deva or the 'Am' series corresponding to that. The first loka would be thus the loka of Narain or Shiva; the second the loka of Brahma or Hiranyagarbha; the third would be the loka of Vishnu which is known as the satya loka; the fourth would be the loka of Soma, Indu or manas, the principle which lies at the root of the generation of the principle of externality or tapah loka. Here the manas in those who rise upwards is restrained from going out into objective manifestation by the practice of tapas which leads upwards to the attainment of that which lies behind manas, the chit or the satya loka. The loka next in order is the janah loka, where the principle of externality having come into being has full play. The manifestation here is characterized by generation in externality to giving rise to beings or embodied entities, existing externally from each other. Going further still, we come to the mahah loka where the embodied beings are characterized by *mahah*, greatness, strength or force which belongs to the principle of vayu, the predominating element of the loka.

Further on, we get the swah loka where the *swa*, or the self, becomes sufficiently individualized, to be visible as it were, and so to manifest the characteristic of roopa, tejas or agni. This is the loka of swarga which the highly virtuous people attain to for temporary periods. Further down is met with the bhuvah loka with the element of apas and the principle of rasa predominating. It has dragged down, as it were, the swah loka beings to its plane and drags up the beings residing on the earth below at the time of death. It is here that generally the deceased beings reside after death for a certain period of time before they return to their rebirth on the earth below.

Last of all comes the bhuh loka, the loka on which we reside at present, which represents the ultimate point or the last stage of the externalizing or objectifying activity of the

‘I am Myself’, denoted by the word *bhu* itself or becoming itself, having become what it could become under the stress of the outward-pressing tendency of consciousness. The beings here arise when this loka takes its birth as a potential seat or germ containing within itself in a latent form all that has gone before; with the promise or possibility of gradually evolving out of it embodied beings with the powers and capacities corresponding to those that are possessed by the beings of the higher lokas; with the additional advantage of the knowledge and experience of the lokas that lie downwards and which those beings have not had the advantage of traversing through.

Here the evolutionary current commencing from the lowest point of *bhu*, which it reached when the *bhuh* loka emerged out of the *bhuvah* loka as an embryo or the golden egg, the *Hiranyagarbha* of the *bhuh* loka, gradually begins to trace its course up through the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms to the attainment of the divine perfection by reinstating itself in that divine consciousness of the ‘I am Myself’, which lies at the root of all universal manifestations from the infinite and the absolute. The current of evolution cannot stop unless it realizes itself in the self-consciousness of the infinite being or be-ness. It would not be enough for the being of self-consciousness simply to present itself as its own objective, as it does in expressing itself as the ‘I am Myself’. It must at the same time bring the ‘Myself’ back to it as its own Inmost Self, absolutely and essentially identical with it, and realize the ‘Myself’ as one with the ‘I’ in the ‘Myself am I’.

Thus we find the ‘Myself’ or the utmost objectivity with the element of self-assertion, the ‘Am’ and the self-apperception or the ‘I’ totally suppressed in it. It predominates in the mineral kingdom and as gradually the ‘Myself factor’ begins to yield out of itself the ‘Am’ factor on account of the incessant efforts that the ‘Am’ factor puts forth from within it to push itself out and to manifest itself, the vegetable kingdom begins to unfold itself until the ‘Am’

factor receives its full manifestation in the animal kingdom. It is then that the 'I' factor begins to press itself out of the animal into the human and finds its full realization in the attainment by the human being of the perfection of divinity, the man-god or god-man, the *avatar*, or the Buddha, the ideal man towards which the current of evolution is continually proceeding, bringing forth at each stage a fuller and more perfect type of being than the one that has preceded.

The *Matsya* avatar represents the type that was more like a fish, similar to the aquatic animals out of which it had arisen as a type or ideal being of the time, when this planet of ours had not yet completely solidified itself and still lay hidden in the aqueous element which yet surrounds it on all sides. The next type that comes was the *Kachchap* or the tortoise, which was not confined to water but had some relation to solid earth which was, in the gradual course of formation, under the stronger and stronger pressure of the 'Myself element'. It was reserved for the third type, the *Varaha*, the mammal type, to appear as the third avatar when the earth pressed itself out of the watery elements surrounding it, asserting its own existence in the 'Myselfness' of the *bhuh loka*.

The fourth type was the intermediate between the animal and the man, the mixture of both, which is represented by the avatar of Narasimha. The fifth type is the *Vamana*, or the dwarf-man, extricated out of the animal, but yet so far as the future humanity was concerned, representing the man in germ, embryo or miniature.

Here it was that the 'I' element first asserted itself and spread its supremacy over all the *bhuh loka* or over the entire field of existence, which is represented by the tradition that the entire field of existence was covered by the three paces of Vamana God, the two paces of which he had already taken beforehand, the 'Myself', the mineral; the 'Am', the vegetable and the animal; and there being no room left for the third, the 'I', the *Bali*, or the ruler of the humanity of the

time. The asuric humanity was made to yield to the third element the 'T' as animal nature of the 'Am' and thus became the source of the evolution of the succeeding humanity whose type at the next stage is represented by Parashurama. At this stage the type indicates that the humanity had the 'T', or subjective element, in it, brought into relative prominence as represented by the life of tapas, led by Parashurama, but it was not yet fully self-regulated and self-controlled. The 'Am' element was still asserting itself now and then as represented by the weapon which Parashurama always carried with him wherewith he used to work havoc and spread fire and destruction all round under the influence of the assertion of the animal nature that had not yet been thoroughly subordinated in him.

The succeeding type was that of Rama, or humanity having attained its perfection as a human being, the animality in it having been curbed and brought down under the control of the human ideal of virtue, greatness and righteousness. The fullness of the divinity had only begun to bloom forth in its splendour and glory to be realized in the three succeeding types or *avatars*. In the avatar of Ramchandra we realize the height to which human greatness can attain: the height of the 'T' element with the 'Am' always accompanying it in its strength and vigour, no doubt, but under the restraint of the law of virtue and duty. Still the greatness of the individual who looks into himself, into the centre of his being and existence, the *atman* – the truly spiritual or divine element which links the individual with all the universal, which makes him feel himself one with the whole creation and overflows with the universal love for all beings in the universe – is yet latent in him.

The next type of Sri Krishna represents the budding forth of the divine principle of the 'T' overflowing with the love of all and realizing its unity with the entire world of existence. The type that comes next, the Buddha, represents the development of the principle of universal love to the fullest extent, and thus gives up the weapon of defence and

attack, which all the preceding types carried in some shape or other, thus representing to the world that the perfection of humanity would ultimately do away with all warfare and bloodshed. The only weapon of attack or defence in order to carry humanity to its ultimate goal would be the application of reason, the discriminating principle in man, the ultimate arbiter of the destinies of humanity, the highest standard of authority. This type is called 'Buddha' as representing the evolution or the assertion of the 'I' principle in rationality or reason in humanity.

This Buddha saw only the objective side, the entire universe of change and transformations as transitory and fleeting, and so culminated in *shoonyavada*. It omitted or overlooked to see the 'I' in itself, the seer in itself, and thus the highest perfection of humanity as the divinity in man was left to be realized by the future type, the highest and the fullest realization of which would be the *Kalki*, the destroyer of all strife, struggle, war and bloodshed. He would sum up in himself all the progress that thoughts would have made by his time and exhibit in himself and in his philosophy the complete realization of all the elements: the seer as well as the seen; the knower and the known; the 'I', the 'Am', and 'Myself'; the principle of universal love as the rule of conduct, guidance and universal thought; the highest perfection of reason and intellect, which solves all the problems of existence to the complete satisfaction of the divine principle of reason. It deduces the entire world phenomena in all its stages, from the only self-evident principle of self-consciousness; giving the fullest details at each stage of transformation that the principle has been undergoing all along in its course of evolution. The whole course of human thought, human civilization, human history has been tending only to produce the highest type of humanity: the ideal avatar, the ideal divine man, the ideal God-man.

Every human being is an approximation to that, to a greater or less degree. The beings on this plane in their

gradual approximation to their highest ideal have been evolving out of themselves higher and higher embodiments. The mineral, representing the 'Myself', shoots forth into the vegetable. The vegetable, working out the 'Am' principle, goes out into the animal; the animal, pressing out the 'I' element involved in it, evolves into the human being. It is here when the current of evolution reaches the point of human development that the 'I' principle gradually begins to assert its independent existence to work itself out into an independent principle to manifest itself as the individualized entity, ego or ahamkara, to furnish itself prominently as the basis of self-centring or self-regarding emotions, affections, desires, pleasures and pains.

To supply the material (fabric) out of which the network of the faculty of memory is constructed, to offer itself as the foundation of the reproductive faculty – the faculty that stores up within itself the impressions or the *samskaras*, the ideation resulting from all sets of activities, mental and physical – it becomes the root cause of the law that lies at the basis of all development, growth and maturity of the latent possibilities in the human nature, which bids fair ultimately to transform it into the highest perfection of the divine nature. It is because the results of the activities at this stage always reproduce themselves in certain modifications of the inward character of the being that throws itself into these activities. The law of karma or the law of causation in respect of the character begins to work and help the beings onwards towards the attainment of their higher destiny. Before this when the 'I' element was a little dormant in the lower order of creation, the sense of individual identity was latent and the evolution of the beings was concerned more with the perfection of the general types than with that of the individualized entities.

It is thus in connection with the 'I' prominently-evolved beings, that is humanity, that the law of karma gets full scope to work itself out as the agency entrusted with the business of evolving each individual entity that falls under its sway

into the highest possible actuality that their nature is capable of. This law first begins to evolve out of the earliest human beings, a higher, a more permanent, a nobler embodiment or *sharira* for the functioning of the energy, the thought energy of the divine. It is latent in the human physical or *parthiva sharira*, the *sharira* or body of *apas tattwa* having *rasa* as its essential principle, the 'I am Myself I am Myself, I am' devoid of the coarseness, solidity or objectivity of the 'Myself' of the *gandha* or *prithvi* element.

The evolution of this *sharira* is necessitated by the fact that it lies latent in the *prithvi* element or principle (vide chart below) of the evolution of the various principles from the consciousness of the Absolute. In obedience to the impulse necessarily working within that consciousness towards carrying back the energy, the current, to the root or source in order to complete the circle of self-consciousness, it has to carry the objective, the ultimate and the absolute objective, if we may so call it, the *prithvi*, back to the subjective, the 'I' in itself. It has necessarily to pass again in its ascent upwards through the same stage which it has passed through in its downward course.

This has been taking place at each stage; and each principle, after having come out as a limited, finite, conditioned manifestation of the principle lying before, has been developing into maturity. It has been giving birth to a fresh principle, limited and conditioned, to work itself out under the influence of the same law of growth and development, after which, having worked out the 'Myself-ness' in it by the attainment of full maturity and the accomplishment of reproduction, it has been working its way back by a certain course of evolution to its ultimate source, the Absolute, standing behind the 'I am Myself' of the Infinite Self-consciousness.

In obedience to this law of evolution the *parthiva sharira*, under the influence of the assertion of the 'I' principle, evolves out of it the *sharira* of *apas* with the essence of *rasa* or pleasures and pains, affection, desires, emotions,

passions, etc. It is these elements of his character that, being gradually strengthened and properly regulated and brought into control, help towards the formation of his *apas sharira*, the emotion or character body. It sums up within itself the powers and faculties that are derived from the parthiva body: the five organs of sense, the organs of action, the will, the manas, the buddhi, the ahamkara and the chit, in accordance with the character of that body, including the five *pranas*, energies, of thought, having undergone five modifications that lie at the basis of all objective evolutions and transformations, for example, *pranas* given below.

The five *pranas* are:

1. *Prana*: ('pra'=forward, 'anna'=press) the motion forward of the divine thought energy which begins to incline the consciousness towards objective manifestations;
2. *Apana*: that is the motion downward of the thought energy assuming objective modification;
3. *Samana*: the motion of the energy in reference to a particular centre in a particularized and localized form;
4. *Vyana*: the energy that works everywhere without any limitation of a particularized centre whereof *samana* is a particularized aspect;
5. *Udana*: the energy that carries the current of the evolution upwards to its source.

These five *pranas* as differentiation of the thought energies are evolved in the assertion of self-consciousness in its complete realization. The formation of this body in the earliest stages, or in the stages of infancy, has to be regulated carefully by the life that is led by the individual having special regard to the nature of his emotions. For, the earliest influence that is brought to bear upon the growth and development of this body is the emotional nature of man, which is more connected with the element of *apas* and the *rasa tanmatra* than with any other principle. Hence it is of the utmost importance to keep away all those emotions, like anger, jealousy, envy and hatred, that are calculated to introduce disintegrating forces into the infant body of *apas*

that is gradually shaping itself under the noble, constructive and lofty influence of the emotion of love, compassion, sympathy, the sense of justice and righteousness.

The emotion of love and compassion has a soothing, invigorating and strengthening influence over the whole system of the apas body and the longer it is allowed to operate upon that body in our own inner nature, the better would it be for the growth and development thereof. There can be no formation, growth or development of any body of whatever element it may be within us without a sufficiently strong influence of the emotion of love working within our nature. When this body of apas, due to the influence of love and compassion, is sufficiently grown up and developed, it becomes capable of functioning upon the plane of apas or bhuvah loka independently of this sthoola sharira or the sharira of prithvi. Then it is, that after death, the individual with this developed body of apas stays longer in bhuvah loka functioning there, exercising its emotional nature of love and compassion, introducing within its nature, stronger and more vigorous impulses from the bhuvah loka. But as it is an individual, having evolved itself out of the parthiva element which is the basis of its individual existence (mooladhara), it becomes necessary for it to return again to the earth under the influence of the mooladharic energies. These set themselves up and assert themselves with sufficient strength when the energies of the apas element begin to subside on account of the forces of karma, of love and compassion that the individual has stored up in his life upon earth, and have been spent up, or, more truly speaking, have been gradually assimilated and built up inwardly into the fabric of the character of the apas body of the individual.

The assertion of those energies of parthiva mooladhara, necessitating thus the assumption by the individual of a parthiva body on this plane of our earth, descends down through the subtler planes of prithvi into another body or sharira of prithvi. Here it works out the possibilities of its nature further and further under the influence of the

current of evolution, which is ever trying to unfold and develop the latent capacities and powers that lie hidden in the inner nature of the individual entity. Its birth and death is necessitated by the fact that the parthiva sharira that it acquires has not got sufficient consistency within itself to last for as long a period as will be necessary for the forces of evolution to evolve out of a parthiva being the perfect divinity that lies necessarily hidden within each being: as the germ of its immortality, the germ of its eternity, the germ of the absolute and the infinite lying in latency in each parthiva atom, having a potentiality which cannot but realize itself in its fullness and perfection.

This necessity of the self-realization of the Absolute, which nothing can stop or prevent, necessitates the several series of births and deaths, which the individual has to undergo until it obtains the perfection which is inherently its own. As long as the apas body is not formed or sufficiently organized to function upon the plane of apas, the individual has to undergo another birth immediately after the death that it has suffered without the intervention of a period of life, long or short, on the apas plane, in accordance with the forces of love generated upon this earth that go to support it. The life on the apas plane is suited more for the assimilation of the principles that are needed for building up the character of the individual, and rejecting those elements or driving out those forces that have entered into the inner nature of the individual on account of the evil thoughts, propensities, actions that he has indulged in his life on earth.

These evil deeds, words or thoughts connected with anger, hatred and lust reside inside the individual within the apas body as disintegrating forces. When on the apas plane the work of the formation of the apas body is taken up by the forces working there, these disintegrating forces offer great hindrance in that direction. A struggle ensues as it were between the forces of formation and development that necessarily work on the apas plane on all the bodies that come within their province, and the forces set up by the

evil tendencies of disintegration and disruption. It is due to this struggle that a feeling of pain and suffering overtakes the individual which goes by the name of the sufferings of hell or *nark*. If the disintegrating forces are not strong, the process of assimilation and formation on the apas plane goes on smoothly and the individual functions there, invigorating and strengthening its body, enjoying a life of peace and happiness, which goes by the name of enjoyments appertaining to the pitri loka.

This state of existence is necessarily due to the fact that the higher we rise, the more we find the recognition of the principle in feeling and action that this entire world of existence has its root in one Being, the Absolute Consciousness; and all beings that appear to exist derive their sustenance, their existence, their energy and strength only therefrom. Thus they can exist, act and live or function upon the plane they live upon only in proportion to the recognition of this unity of all beings in their root, in their strength, their energy, their vigour, their life and all that goes to make them what they are, culminating in that feeling of divine love, which is the only possible mode of feeling as long as this principle of the unity of all beings stands and is clearly understood in the mind's eye.

Thus the recognition of the principle of unity of all beings and the feeling of love consequent thereupon is necessarily stronger in the bhuvah loka or apas loka than on this earth. So those who go up there without the feeling of love strongly implanted in their nature rather with the feeling of selfish hatred or anger find themselves out of their elements, unable to penetrate further on into the inner precincts of the loka where higher and virtuous beings enjoy their life in peace and happiness. They are compelled to remain on the outskirts of the bhuvah loka, which is spoken of somewhere as the *nark* loka, somewhere as the *preta* loka, in continual struggle with the forces working there to form their apas body, purging it of the vicious elements so that somehow or other they might be fit to work higher in their

next birth on this earth. A strong feeling of remorse and repentance necessarily overtakes them when they find their condition so miserable. It is this feeling of remorse which succeeds ultimately in purifying them of the evil elements and ultimately making them fit to start afresh on the course of evolution better equipped in their next life.

Alongside the development of the body of *apas*, the development of the body of *agni*, the 'I am Myself I am Myself I', the form idea preponderating, also takes place. In the *apas* element the essence was *rasa*. The assertion or affirmation of the form idea or *roopa* idea, is the essential subjective principle of *agni*. In the *apas* element the *roopa* idea had assumed itself in the form of emotion expressing itself in universal love and compassion, which is based upon the assertion of the form idea or all formal existence as our own existence or 'Am'. This appears quite clear when we compare the thought germs, so to say, that generate the form idea or the essence of *agni* equal to 'I am Myself I am Myself I' with the thought germs that lie at the origin of the *rasa* idea, namely 'I am Myself I am Myself I am'.

Thus, the evolution of the body of *agni* with the essence of the form idea begins to clearly set forth the formal conception or ideation of all modes of being or beings in this universe. Every being that appears before us has got a certain form idea underlying it, which works behind it as its potentiality and in time makes it realize the hidden potentiality into an actuality in the course of time. The gradual acquisition of knowledge in this direction and the exercise of the inner faculties towards acquisition of such knowledge, serves to evolve, strengthen, organize and invigorate the element of *agni* in the body of *agni*, which is connected with the third *loka*, the *swarga loka*. The individual, whose *antahkarana* or mind is cultured in this direction, does not come back from the *pitri loka*, but ascends higher and enters the *swarga loka*, where his body of *agni tattwa* is especially organized and strengthened by his functioning upon that plane. As long as his mental culture

here on earth supports him on that plane, and then on the assertion of the mooladhharic energies, he has to come back to this earth after having assimilated and built into his agni body, or mental nature, the result of his culture here as capacities, powers and faculties of his mind.

Those who do not attend to the acquisition of knowledge in this direction, remain without the formation, development and organization of the body and faculties necessary for entitling them to enter into the swarga loka. A special department of the study of the philosophy of evolution which deals with the evolution of the agni tattwa and its essence, roopa tanmatra, is the most suitable study for the evolution of these faculties. In the absence of that, or in some sense leading to that, the study of pure mathematics, physics, astronomy and other allied physical sciences may be recommended as calculated to awaken those faculties, to entitle us to attain the swarga loka.

The study of the sciences mentioned above is concerned more with the formal side of the universe and therefore it is calculated to awaken and evolve the agnic faculties and capacities that lie hidden within our nature. There is a yet deeper side of the universe. The study of it is concerned more with the functions, the activities and the powers that the various elements, principles and their modifications exhibit in relation to each other, in accordance with the attraction and repulsion or the sensations of contact, that arise in consequence of the actions and interaction of the forces working inside those principles and elements.

The study of this department of the universe strengthens and helps the organization of the body or faculties of vayu. It enables the possessor of such an organized body to proceed higher up into the mahah loka, which is the great centre of all the forces, mental and material, that manifest themselves everywhere in this wide universe. The activity of our inner nature in this direction is most suitably awakened by the close study of the philosophy of evolution dealing with the department of vayu or the sparsha tanmatra, denoted by

the formula 'I am Myself I am Myself'. The study of this department reveals the stage of consciousness, represented by the formula mentioned above, with all the various modifications that the consciousness undergoes at the stage, assuming the form of various forces that helps the evolution of the world further downwards.

In the absence thereof, the study of sciences that deal more with the objects in motion or the dynamical side of the universe can help towards the same end, for example, the awakening, the evolving, the organizing and the strengthening of the faculties of the intellect that derive this strength from the principle of *vayu* and *sparsha tanmatra*. The faculties lying still higher are those of the principle of *akasha* and *shabda tanmatra*. The functional side of the universe or the dynamical side along with the statical side or the side of form can only be studied, understood, grasped and explained by means of words or certain modifications of *shabda*.

Even when we do not explain our ideas to others, all our thinking processes are carried on by means of words so much so that, if we try the experiment, we shall find that it will be impossible to think, ordinarily speaking, within ourselves without talking, however inaudibly it might be to ourselves. This shows that all intellectual activity of whatever kind it might be can only be carried on by means of the expression which words or language supply us. In order to carry on our study of the universe in all its sides, we have to study the vehicle as well through which the study is carried on. We have therefore to study the science of words, the science of language, the peculiar forces or shades of thought that underlie the particular words that go to make up the language, and thus gradually try to pass from the words or the verbal expressions to the thoughts that underlie them. Here lies the borderland that separates the world of manifestations in externality or extension from the world of thought or the world in intention (thought world).

The study of the analysis of language carried out by the great grammarian Panini being properly explained

and understood, along with the philosophy of evolution concerned with the department of akasha or shabda tanmatra, is most suited to shape the organism and strengthen the body of akasha, which can make us fit to enter into the janah loka or the loka of generation or the world in extension or expansion. The study of language or the expression side of the objective universe leads necessarily to the study of the thought forms that lie behind those expressions or words. In the study of the universe in extension, we had the form side or the objects at rest, and the motion side or the contactual sparsha side, the objects touching or existing in touch or motion; and the shabda or that which differentiates, distinguishes, classifies and generalizes both the sides of the universe, the statical as well as the dynamical, the side of the objects at rest and the side of the objects in motion.

In the same way, in the world of thought or intention there is the world of thought at rest, having assumed a particular form, a living form at the stage of 'I am Myself I', where the three principles subjectify themselves as being three moments of the life of this 'I', giving shape by their combined unity under the principle of 'I', to the principle of manas. The body having this principle or the faculties concerned with this principle remain hidden, lying potentially within us until we commence and devote ourselves to the study of the world of thought in thought forms. When the study of the philosophy of evolution, dealing with the principle of manas is undertaken and carried out with earnestness and devotion, the faculties of manas begin to unfold themselves by the continual exercise of the principle of manas, and the body of manas is formed and organized. The study here is more like the study of psychology, but the psychology is based more upon actual introspection, meditation and concentration than what goes under that name, which is more a science dealing with the department of vayu and akasha than with the department of manas.

In this region of our study we have also to observe, classify and generalize the ideas of the mind, the mental activities in their relation and interrelation in connection with the functions that they perform. The mind with the idea represents one department of study, the department of *manas*; and the mind with the ideas in action and interaction represents the principle of *chit*, or mind in motion, or *chit* with *vritti*. The *chit* represents the three principal ideas or elements of consciousness: the 'I', the 'am', the 'myself', going off into each other, acting and reacting upon each other, each element in its individuality standing apart from each other, though existing as the moments of one single life. When the ideas of the mind, or the principal idea that underlies the ideal constitution of the universe, are grasped in their relations and interrelation of functional activity, the faculty of *chit* is awakened. One who has got this faculty developed in himself can rise up to the plane or *satya loka*.

Higher than this is the study of the principle that unifies the ideas underlying this ideal constitution of the universe. The 'I am Myself' has not only to be grasped as the combination of these three moments of the 'I am Myself'. The principle of self-assertion or self-existence, the 'I am', is realized as the basic element giving rise to the projection of the 'Myself', as the other differential product of the combination of the 'I' and the 'Am' as two different elements or principles acting upon each other, and giving rise to a modified expression of the inherent energy of the 'I' as the 'Myself'. In short the 'myself-ness' of the 'Myself' resolves itself back into the self-affirmation of the 'I am'. It is then that the principle of *buddhi*, knowledge or true wisdom, is awakened which makes the entire universe appear as the one universal 'I am'.

With the realization firmly accomplished, the buddhic faculty is fully unfolded and the body made up of the elemental energies of that faculty, the body of *buddhi*, enables the individual to rise up to the plane of *buddhi* or the *loka* of *Hiranyagarbha*. The next highest step has to be

taken by the realization that the 'Am-ness' of the 'I' is simply the 'I-ness' of the 'I' in active manifestation of self-assertion in the realization of self-consciousness. The 'Am-ness' is nothing different from the 'I-ness', and thus the 'I-ness' alone can be the real principle standing at the root of all manifestation, *vivarta*, mere ideal transformation. Realizing the principle as the essential principle which appears in so many forms as the numerous phenomena of the universe but ever remains the same in substance, the 'I-ness' of the 'I' – the 'I' by itself, in itself, and of itself – the plane of universal Aham is attained. The samprajnat samadhi is completed, and the Absolute and the Infinite standing behind this 'I' is felt, recognized and realized. The limitations fall off, the perfection of divinity is attained, allowing the *asamprajnat* or the Absolute Consciousness to live of itself.

Appendix 2

Theory of Evolution Chart

‘I’ SERIES

ANTAHKARANA	
Up to this the assertion is totally within	• I – <i>ahamkara</i>, individuality • I am – <i>mahat</i> or <i>buddhi</i> or discrimination or intellect • I am Myself – <i>chit</i> or feeling • (I am Myself) I – <i>manas</i> or will
Here commences the idea of without	• (I-am-Myself) I am – <i>shabda</i> or externality-points (when it comes back to the surface) • (I-am-Myself) I am Myself – <i>sparsha</i> or touch (<i>sparsha</i> as assertion within) • (I-am-Myself-I-am-Myself) I – <i>roopa</i> or form (<i>roopa</i> as assertion within) • (I-am-Myself-I-am-Myself) I am – <i>rasa</i> or taste (<i>rasa</i> as assertion without) • (I-am-Myself-I-am-Myself) I am Myself – <i>gandha</i>

‘AM’ SERIES

- Assertion of the shabda or externality-points in co-existence with the subjectivity suppressed – *akasha* or space – (I am Myself I am) Am.
- Assertion of sparsha with the subjectivity suppressed – *vayu* or air – (I am Myself I am Myself) Am.
- Assertion of roopa with the subjectivity suppressed – *tejas* or *agni* or light – (I am Myself I am Myself I) Am. The idea of form, when ‘I-ness’ is gone, can only be grasped by light. This form idea, as it grows more and more vivid, assumes the form of light and gives rise to heat.
- Assertion of rasa with the subjectivity suppressed – (I am Myself I am Myself I am) Am – *apas* or water. Here it is that we get an idea of taste first of all and taking the last three materials as *tejas*, *vayu* and *akasha*, we cannot but get water.
- Assertion of gandha or smell with the subjectivity suppressed – (I am Myself I am Myself I am Myself) Am as *prithvi* or earth. For, it is the externality idea filtering down through several stages: first, touching the surface of antahkarana in sparsha; entering within in roopa; asserting itself within in rasa; then asserting itself without or in itself or externality, i.e. gandha. So externality being in externality at this stage loses all touch with the subjectivity. It becomes motionless or solidified and extended without in externality. It becomes *prithvi*, meaning literally, ‘that which has its being in extension’. This with taste, roopa, sparsha and shabda becomes the sthoola prithvi. So we get the five gods named above, or the assertive universal sides of the nine subjective principles, evolved from the ‘I’ side of the ‘I am Myself’: *akasha*, *vayu*, *tejas*, *apas*, *prithvi*. The ‘Am’ similarly combining with the first four principles of ahamkara, buddhi, chit and manas gives rise to the four gods: Rudra, Shiva or Narayana; Brahma; Vishnu; and Soma respectively. That is to say, the four subjective evolved sides of the self being manifested in assertion represent the four gods named above.

‘MYSELF’ SERIES

The same nine principles under the influence of the ‘Myself’ or objective side of Self-consciousness go out into objective particularized pluralities or limited being, which taken in aggregate would make up the different lokas. Thus the first principle evolves many particularized, limited, finite beings with the principle of ‘I’, the ahamkara, having gone into the ‘Am’ or Rudra becoming ‘myselfied’ or objectively particularized as the finite modes of the existence of that Rudra being expressed by the formula ‘I’, ‘Am’, ‘Myself.’

Notes

Notes



Sri Mangal Charan was born in 1875 in the state of Bihar, India. Already at a young age, he began to acquire knowledge of philosophy, science and literature of the West, and the ancient scriptures of the East.

Sri Mangal Charan graduated from the University of Allahabad, and took his BL degree in 1900. He remained the unquestioned leader of the Arrah Bar, his native place. His evenings and Sundays were completely devoted to religious discussions and philosophical discourses. After a short illness, he passed away in 1914.



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